

Soldiers

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

March 2002

**West Point
at 200**

We Were Soldiers...

Air-Land Ambulance





Cashing in on the GI Bill



The Official U.S. Army Magazine

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▲26

FEATURES

4 West Point at 200

For two centuries the U.S. Military Academy has turned young Americans into leaders of the Army and the nation.

10 Prepping for the Point

For many active-duty and reserve-component soldiers, the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School is the first step toward attending West Point.

11 West Point's Other Soldiers

Enlisted soldiers and NCOs play a vital role in shaping the Army officers produced by West Point, while also providing vital support and training.

16 Repairing the Pentagon

Construction teams have been working around the clock since Sept. 11 to repair the damage done to the historic Pentagon.

18 America's Lasting Monument

Built during the dark days of World War II, the Pentagon has long been the center of the nation's military might.

20 Art From the Heart

The Pentagon is now home to thousands of artworks created by America's children to honor the nation and its martyrs.

22 Cashing in on the GI Bill

Here's what you need to know about the education benefits your military service has earned you.

24 Using the Montgomery GI Bill

Keep this pull-out poster as a handy reference to the MGIB's eligibility requirements and application procedures.

26 "We Were Soldiers"

A stirring new film starring Mel Gibson tells the heroic story of the soldiers who fought the first large-scale action of the Vietnam War.

44 Air-Land Ambulance

The soldiers of the Germany-based 421st Medical Battalion have raised air and ground evacuation to an art form.



Art From the Heart

▲20



DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Feedback
- 12 Briefings
- 38 Focus on People
- 40 Postmarks
- 42 Legal Forum
- 48 Around the Services

◀16



Front cover:
The U.S. Military Academy celebrates its 200th birthday this month. —
Montage courtesy
USMA Public
Affairs Office

◀4



West Point at 200

Story by Joe Tombrello



GENERAL of the Army Douglas MacArthur once said that the words “Duty, Honor, Country” were the cornerstone upon which worthwhile lives and institutions could be built. Nowhere is that more true than at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

As the academy enters its third century of service to the nation, its mission remains the same as that established by Congress on March 16, 1802: to produce well-trained and dedicated Army officers committed to careers of selfless service to the nation. It is a goal, and a process, whose foundations date from the earliest days of the nation the academy continues to serve.

Joe Tombrello is the chief of command information in the USMA Public Affairs Office.

Photos courtesy USMA unless otherwise credited.

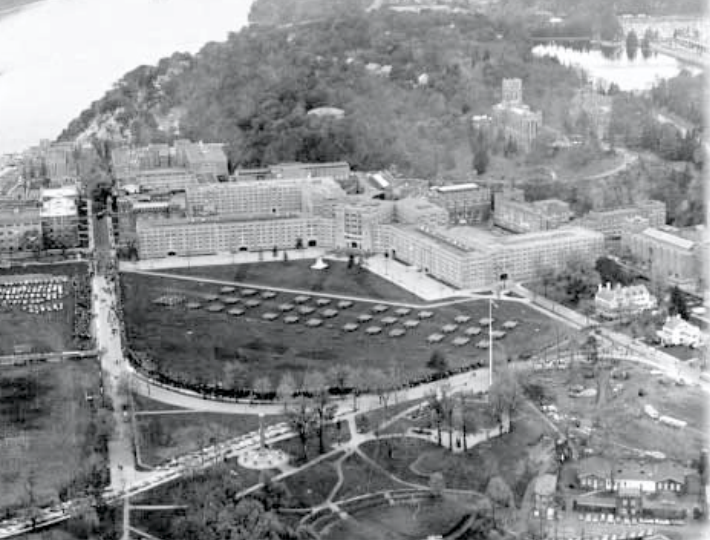
(Left, top) The academy's band plays as the colors pass in review.

(Left, center) Graduating cadets wait for the ceremony to begin.

(Left, bottom) Cadets enjoy a meal in Washington Hall's dining facility.

(Right) White hats fill the sky in the traditional post-graduation hat toss.





The academy continued to grow throughout the post-World War II period, as this 1972 aerial view emphasizes. Note the cadets in formation, and the crowds of onlookers lining the roads.

A Military Foundation

A true national treasure and historic site, West Point was first occupied in January 1778 as a Revolutionary War outpost. It is America's oldest continuously garrisoned Army installation, the nation's first engineering school and the home of the U.S. Corps of Cadets since 1802.

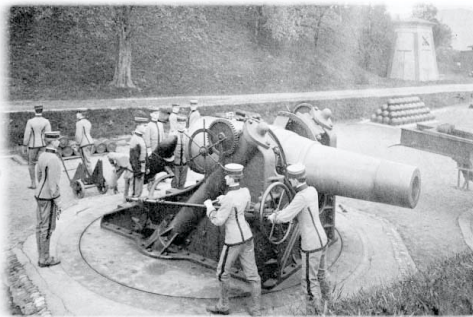
The British and Americans both recognized

the strategic military importance of New York's Hudson River, especially since in the late 18th century ships were the primary means of transportation for commerce and military logistics. GEN George Washington referred to West Point as the "key to the continent" since it dominated a sharp bend in the Hudson and thus effectively controlled waterborne traffic between Canada, New England and the

southern colonies, as well as to the Great Lakes and the interior of the American continent.

Thaddeus Kosciuszko, a Pole and one of the heroes of the decisive American victory at Saratoga, began to supervise the construction of fortifications at West Point in 1778, and Washington transferred his headquarters there in 1779. Continental soldiers built forts, artillery

Smartly dressed cadets learn to operate large-caliber artillery guns during summer camp sometime in the early 1900s.



In 1843, legislation was passed specifying that the Corps of Cadets would consist of a cadet from each congressional district, as well as others from the territories and nation at large.

*West Point
1802-2002*

batteries and redoubts at the site, and extended a 100-ton iron chain across the Hudson to restrict river traffic. The extensive fortifications helped prevent the British from taking control of the vital strategic site.

A School for Soldiers

During the nation's war for independence the Continental Army was forced to rely largely upon foreign-born military officers and engineers for leadership and technical skills. Many of our founding fathers — including Washington, Henry Knox, Alexander Hamilton and John Adams — sought both the professional military expertise necessary to win independence and the mathematical and scientific education they believed necessary to maintain it. Others, however, opposed the founding of a military academy because they feared the establishment of a professional officer corps and standing army.

This long debate continued until after the election of President Thomas Jefferson, when legislation to establish a military academy quickly moved through Congress. The final sections of an "Act Fixing the Military Peace Establishment of the United States," were signed by Jefferson on March 16, 1802.

The legislation separated the engineers and artillery, and authorized a corps of engineers with a total of seven officers and 10 cadets and provided that they constitute a military academy at West Point. The military academy would have both military and civilian benefits,



Cadets stand inspection during the 1899 summer encampment.



Cadets march to chapel, 1966.

broaden the composition of America's military leadership to make it more representative of society, and provide the military technical training for national defense and scientific education necessary to build the young nation.

Academy graduates made their first significant military contributions during the War of 1812. Nearly all of the initial 100 graduates participated in the conflict, and many made vital engineering contributions to the nation's defensive fortifications.

COL Sylvanus Thayer, considered to be



Students stand on tree-shaded Professor's Row, 1863.



Cadets of the class of 1980 are sworn in. The first female cadets had entered West Point four years earlier.

the father of the academy, was superintendent from 1817 to 1833. He upgraded academic standards, instilled military discipline and emphasized honorable conduct. Aware of the need for engineers, Thayer made civil engineering the foundation of the curriculum. USMA graduates were largely responsible for construction of the nation's initial railway lines, bridges, harbors and roads.

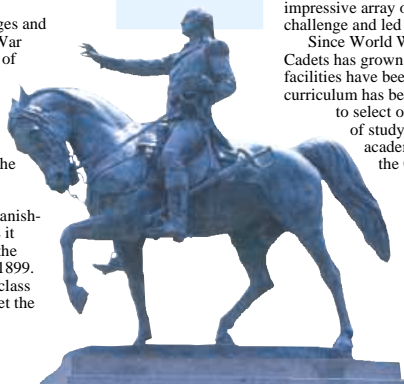
In 1843, legislation was passed specifying that the Corps of Cadets would consist of a cadet from each congressional district, as well as others from the territories and nation at large. This was indicative of a desire to make the academy a national institution that would attract individuals from all walks of life and all parts of the country.

After gaining experience and national recognition during the War with Mexico, academy graduates firmly established West Point in the national consciousness by dominating the highest ranks on both sides of the Civil War.

The growth of civilian colleges and technical schools in post-Civil War America fostered the expansion of the academy's curriculum beyond the strict engineering focus. Following the creation of Army post-graduate command and staff schools, military officials came to view the academy as the first step in a continuing Army education.

The 1898 outbreak of the Spanish-American War and the demands it placed on the Army resulted in the early graduation of the class of 1899. It was the first, but not the last, class that would be accelerated to meet the

The nation was caught unprepared for World War I, but West Point graduates again rose to high positions of responsibility.



This statue of a George Washington astride his horse graces the academy's Plain.

need for officers in the field. Congress authorized an increase in the size of the Corps of Cadets to 481 in 1900. The Philippine Insurrection closely followed, and the Class of 1901 was also graduated early.

At the 1902 centennial celebration President Theodore Roosevelt said: "No other institution in this land has contributed so many names as West Point has contributed to the honor roll of the nation's greatest citizens."

The nation was caught unprepared for World War I, but West Point graduates again rose to high positions of responsibility — providing 34 corps and division commanders. Under the command of GEN John J. Pershing, class of 1886, the inexperienced American Army was quickly trained, equipped and deployed to the brutal trenches of the western front, where it contributed greatly to the Allied victory.

After the war Superintendent Douglas MacArthur diversified the school's academic program and pushed for major changes in the physical fitness program. "Every cadet an athlete" became an important goal. Additionally, cadet management of the honor system was formalized with the creation of the Cadet Honor Committee.

In 1942 Congress expanded the size of the Corps of Cadets to 2,496. Again, West Point met the needs of the Army as the Class of 1943 graduated six months early and subsequent classes, from June 1943 through 1947, graduated in three years. West Point graduates figured prominently in the war's conduct, holding 89 division and higher commands. Dwight Eisenhower, MacArthur, Omar Bradley, Henry Arnold, Mark Clark, George S. Patton Jr. and Joseph Stilwell were among the impressive array of graduates who met the challenge and led the Allies to victory.

Since World War II, West Point's Corps of Cadets has grown to 4,000. The school's facilities have been modernized, and the curriculum has been expanded to permit cadets to select one of 21 majors and 24 fields of study. Women first entered the academy in 1976 as members of the Class of 1980.

Duty, Honor, Country

From humble beginnings has developed the legacy of the "Long Gray Line," that unbroken parade of graduates now entering its third century of service to our nation. Members of that line include U.S. presidents Ulysses S. Grant and Dwight D. Eisenhower; Heisman Trophy winners Felix Blanchard, Glenn Davis and Pete Dawkins; Generals of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Henry H. Arnold and Omar Bradley; architect and builder of the Panama Canal George Goethals; Roscoe Robinson Jr., the first black four-star general; Edward White II, the first American to walk in space;



More than a simple military school, West Point is a highly respected — and academically demanding — institution of higher learning.



Reconciliation Plaza honors those cadets and graduates who died in action during the Civil War — both for the Union and the Confederacy.

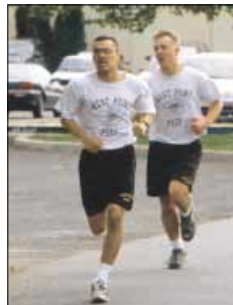
*West Point
1802-2002*



GEN H. Norman Schwarzkopf reviews the Corps of Cadets during a post-Desert Storm visit.

Prepping for the Point

Story by Joe Tombrello



Physical training — including both running and weightlifting — is also an important part of each USMAPS cadet's daily routine.

EACH year approximately 150 active-duty and reserve-component soldiers are offered admissions to the U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School, commonly referred to as the Prep School, West Point Prep or USMAPS. Although some soldiers may be offered admissions directly to West Point, most attend the Prep School first.

West Point's current Cadet Brigade Commander, Cadet First CPT Andrew T. Blickhahn, is a Prep School graduate. Blickhahn enlisted in the Army upon his 1994 high school graduation and served in military intelligence

until selected to attend USMAPS in 1997. Along with the responsibilities of being the highest-ranking cadet, Blickhahn is also captain of the academy's well-regarded Sport Parachute Team.

"I talked to my commanding officer about West Point after a lieutenant I served with in Korea explained the whole application and selection process to me," said Blickhahn. "I had grown to love the Army by that point in my career, and I really wanted to contribute all I could to make the Army a better place to be."

As the name implies, West Point Prep prepares soldiers for success at West Point through an intensive curriculum focused on English, mathematics, military instruction and physical training.

"Attending the Prep School was the smartest thing I could have done," Blickhahn said. "The school refreshed my academic skills and introduced me

to 200 comrades and West Point classmates. I've met life-long friends and comrades in arms because of the Prep experience."

"The Corps of Cadets needs motivated, competent, proud soldiers from the Army to join their ranks and lead the Army of tomorrow," said Blickhahn. "I encourage all soldiers interested in becoming officers to apply." □

How to Apply

PREP School applicants must be U.S. citizens, under 22 years old prior to July 1 of the year entering the Prep School, unmarried with no legal obligation to support dependents, high school graduates or have a GED, be of high moral character, and have a sincere interest in attending West Point and becoming Army officers. Soldiers who meet the basic eligibility requirements and have SAT scores greater than 1050, or ACT composite scores of 23 or higher, are especially encouraged to apply.

All applicants must obtain endorsements from their unit company commanders. While this endorsement is considered a nomination, soldiers should also obtain additional nominations from their congressional sources. Samples of the commander's endorsement and congressional nomination are available online at www.usma.edu/admissions.

Application requirements must be completed by April 1 to be considered for an appointment to West Point or the Prep School in July of the same year. Interested soldiers should contact CPT Cliff Hodges, Soldier Admissions Officer, at (DSN) 688-5780, toll free (800) 822-USMA extension 5780, commercial (845) 938-5780 or e-mail tc2324@usma.edu.



Mathematics are a key part of the USMAPS' challenging curriculum.

West Point's Other Soldiers

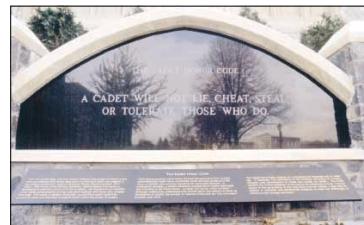
Story by SSG Marcia Hart

FOR 200 years West Point has supplied the Army with commissioned leaders of character. Since the academy's founding, enlisted soldiers and noncommissioned officers have played a vital role in shaping future Army officers, as well as providing vital support and training.

"It is the time that the enlisted soldiers spend with cadets, teaching them the ways of the service, how to work with the young people they will be leading and giving them a love of the service and of the troops that is so very vital if they are going to be effective leaders in the field," said USMA historian Dr. Steve Grove. "Perhaps the most famous of all enlisted men was Marty Maher, the subject of the famous movie 'The Long Gray Line' with Tyrone Power and Maureen O'Hara."

Maher, an enlisted man who rose through the ranks, had been a waiter in the Cadet Mess, a swimming instructor and the Cadet Gym custodian until he retired as a technical sergeant, equivalent to today's sergeant first class. He was a source of support and solace to cadets for 50 years, serving as guide, friend and father confessor to thousands of cadets.

One of the most notable connections between the enlisted men and women and Corps of Cadets is the USMA Band. The band at West Point



The values of West Point's famed Cadet Honor Code are enshrined on this monument.

Teaching cadets about Army life is only one of the many tasks soldiers assigned to West Point perform. Enlisted members of the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, and such tenant units as the medical and dental activities provide vital support services that help accomplish the USMA mission.

dates back to the earliest days of the Military Academy.

"From reveille to taps, from the reception-day parade to the graduation parade, the enlisted men and women of the band are central to the West Point experience," said Grove.

Likewise, tactical noncommissioned officers have played a key role in the academy's history. They have mentored, counseled, led, coached, trained and evaluated cadets as part of the Brigade Tactical Department. They oversee each cadet's academic, military, physical and moral-ethical development, working within the framework of the cadet companies.

"Initially, TAC NCOs were only assigned at the regimental level, which gave cadets only very limited exposure to NCOs and their role in the Army," said Corps of Cadets CSM Jeffrey Greer. "As years passed, officials increased the cadets' exposure to, and their ability to interact with, NCOs."

"An assignment to West Point is unique for enlisted soldiers," said West Point's CSM Mary E. Sutherland. "Our role in the accomplishment of the USMA mission is one of great importance. We represent the initial exposure for the Corps of Cadets, and I feel a special responsibility in ensuring that this exposure accurately reflects the professionalism, dedication and ability of the enlisted soldiers." □



A graduating cadet shakes the hand of an enlisted member of the academy's staff.

SSG Marcia Hart is the NCOIC of the USMA Public Affairs Office.



Operation Noble Eagle Continues

AT press time, more than 22,000 Army National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers had been called up and continue to provide security at airports and other facilities around the country.

The Department of Defense has launched "United in Memory," a special password-protected website for families of the people killed or wounded in the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon.

Operation Enduring Freedom

ON Jan. 4, a special forces sergeant was killed by hostile fire in Afghanistan and a Central Intelligence Agency officer was injured.

Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division replaced marines in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The Fort Campbell, Ky., soldiers' missions include maintaining a presence, operating the airfield, coordinating with the Afghan interim government, assisting humanitarian organizations and running the detention facilities.

Army Materiel Command provided Force Provider base camps to the Afghan theater of operations.

U.S. Army civil-affairs teams began working with international and nongovernmental organizations to increase humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

A 1,000-member task force of mainly military police from Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Campbell; Roosevelt Roads, P.R.; Camp Lejeune, N.C.; Norfolk, Va.; Dover Air Force Base, Del.; and Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., set up a detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

U.S. forces detained 434 Taliban and Al Qaeda members, 384 in the Afghanistan region and 50 at Guantanamo Bay, as of mid-January.

On Nov. 11, Third Army/Army Forces Central Command established Coalition Forces Land Component Command for Operation Enduring Freedom.

U.S. Army explosive ordnance disposal teams worked to clear the Mazar-e-Sharif airfield and surrounding area of mines to allow military and humanitarian assistance aircraft to use the airfield.

Soldiers in Afghanistan and surrounding areas that receive imminent danger pay or hostile fire pay are eligible for combat-zone tax exclusion.

This information was current as of Jan. 16, 2002, and was drawn from Army News Service and Department of Defense News releases, and from the American Forces Information Service.

Alexandria, Va.

MTMC to Improve Moves

CHANGES are coming in the way the Military Traffic Management Command administers soldiers' permanent-change-of-station moves.

"We are changing the processes that fundamentally affect how service members move," said LTC Patty Hunt, Army deputy chief of staff for passenger and personal prop-

erty. "These changes go to the core of the way we conduct business.

"These, combined with lessons learned from our pilot experience, will represent a major difference in the future program and the automation to support that program," she said.

Each year, MTMC moves more than 500,000 service members. The changes could be in place as early as spring — in time for the busy summer moving surge.

Changes will come in two

Training Update

Website Online For Anti-Terrorism Training

THE Web has replaced slides for Army personnel's annual anti-terrorism, force protection training.

The security website at www.at-awareness.org, helps soldiers and Army civilians meet their level-one anti-terrorism, force-protection training, which must also be taken before traveling overseas.

"The website was created to eliminate some of the work for antiterrorism officers so they can concentrate more on their primary mission," said Kris Cline, senior security specialist for the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.

Not just anyone can log onto the site. It requires an access code that has to be issued by an installation's force protection officer.

The web-based training is a multiple-choice test that puts the individual in the middle of deadly scenarios, and gives immediate feedback when the person chooses the wrong answers.

The training begins with a statement explaining three ways on how not to be a target of terrorism, made by retired GEN Henry Shelton, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He said by keeping a low profile, being unpredictable and being vigilant, people can deter terrorist strikes. Shelton's advice in the beginning of the training session provides the information a person needs to make a number of right decisions while taking the 32-question test.

At the end of each scenario correct answers are reinforced, and a certificate is issued when the training is completed.

More changes to the website are being made. Family members will also be able to access the site within a year, Kline said.

Government personnel and their family members need to realize that force protection is not just the police or intelligence community's problem, Kline said. — *Army News Service*

broad areas — faster deliveries and higher qualification standards to move personal property.

MTMC is decreasing the time allowed for the delivery of service members' personal property in international moves, said Richard Morrow, a traffic-management specialist.

"This will represent changes — big and small — in the amount of time service members have to wait for their property to arrive at the next duty location."

For example, 66 days is the current time allowed to ship a service member's household goods from Fort Hood, Texas, to Kaiserslautern, Germany. The proposed changes would cut that time to 54 days.

In a related initiative, MTMC is increasing the standards required to qualify as a Department of Defense personal-property carrier. "Each carrier must reapply under the new standard to remain an approved DOD carrier," said

Sylvia Walker, a traffic management specialist.

The revised standards call for carriers to meet higher financial reporting and operating standards, including increased cargo liability insurance and maintenance of a performance bond for domestic moves. — *MTMC Public Affairs Office*

San Antonio, Texas

Army Sponsors All American Bowl

SEVENTY-FOUR of the nation's top high school football players descended on San Antonio recently and learned about the Army along the way.

These players were in town to play in the U.S. Army All American Bowl that featured 74 All-American players from around the country playing an East-versus-West all-star game.

For the Army, this game was about much more than a day of football, according to MG Dennis D. Cavin, commander of U.S. Army Recruiting Command. It was about a commitment to the youth of America, he said.

"The perception that these young people have is that the Army is a group of people who 'are not like me,'" said Cavin.

"That perception is all wrong. We have to change that through outreach and demonstrating how the Army works."

Part of that exposure came in the form of real soldiers doing real jobs, brought to the game to talk to prospective recruits.

Before the game the Army traveled to more than 20 cities to name players to the teams and to present them with jerseys. In addition to the media opportunity that this provided, it added something else — a chance to expose America's youth to today's Army.

"This is an awareness campaign, part of the Army's outreach program to show America who the Army is and what we are about," said Cavin.

"America's Army takes youth from all walks of life, and after a couple of years the Army will return a better citizen with a skill and a sense of purpose," said Cavin.

In the end the score of the game didn't matter. What mattered was that everyone involved came out a winner, the players and the Army, Cavin said.

"The Army is a winner," said Cavin, "because we have exposed 74 future leaders to what the Army is really all about." — *ARNEWS*

Assignment News

Website Lets Soldiers ASK For Assignment Options

A WEB-based program now gives enlisted soldiers a say in choosing their next duty assignments.

The Assignment Satisfaction Key, or ASK, Internet tool will provide soldiers, for the first time, the capability to post assignment preference information directly onto the Total Army Personnel Database.

In the old "Dream Sheet" days, soldiers could choose from 230 continental United States locations and 280 overseas locations, said COL Jeffrey Redmann, deputy director of Enlisted Personnel Management.

"In reality, soldiers had little chance of being assigned to many of these locations," he said.

ASK will require soldiers to select three CONUS locations and three other preferences outside the continental United States.

Preference locations are those in which a soldier would prefer to be assigned, said MSG Thomas Gills, a branch manager at Total Army Personnel Command.

The first two preference choices will be from the Army's 10 divisions, because that's where soldiers are needed most, Gills said. The other choice will be from an expanded listing which includes the divisional installations plus other CONUS installations.

Soldiers may also select three CONUS and three OCONUS volunteer locations. Gills said volunteer locations are those a soldier would want to go to if asked to move immediately.

Soldiers who don't submit preferences will be sent to duty stations based on the needs of the Army, Gills said. Soldiers also have to understand that they will not always be put in a position because they want to go there and it's open, Gills said.

ASK is available to soldiers through PERSCOM's website at www.perscom.army.mil. Soldiers will need to use their Army Knowledge Online account passwords to gain access to their information. — *ARNEWS*



Soldiers were on hand to talk with spectators at the recent U.S. Army All American Bowl in San Antonio.



David L. Barrett

Alexandria, Va.

Army Actors Seek Audiences

THE soldier cast and crew of "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)" have taken their show to the lower 48 states, Alaska, the Pacific and the Far East. Their final performance will take place in April.

Three soldiers — a chemical engineer, a mechanic and a field-artillery surveyor — perform all 37 of the bard's works as audiences likely have never seen them before. And they do it in 90 minutes.

"Theater BRAVO!, as the troupe is named, provides entertainment by the soldier for the soldier," said Tim Higdon, Army Entertainment Division producer. The tradition of soldier entertainment originated with SGT Irving Berlin in World War I.

This Army Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Entertainment Division production of Shakespeare's works, directed by British free-lance director Paul Bourne, is an English professor's nightmare. Three male actors play various Shakespearean roles of both sexes in a madcap, energetic comedy.

Higdon said BRAVO! is performing Shakespeare because everybody's heard of him and the soldiers perform the play in a way everyone can relate to.

"Audiences don't have to understand the Shakespearean language, because we don't necessarily use it the whole time," said Higdon.

Imagine "Othello" done in rap, "Henry V" in a football-game setting or "Romeo and Juliet" as a slapstick bit, he said. Even dinosaurs make an ap-

pearance in this play.

The actors — SPC Travis DelMatto, PFC Jason King and PFC Derek Shannon — are supported by two technicians, SGT Thomas Labeth and PFC Jarrod Lancaster, who change the scenery, run the lights and sound, help the actors with their costumes, and make sure the dinosaurs don't roam out into the audience.

For information on future MWR presentations, visit www.armyentertainment.com. — *Community and Family Support Center PAO*

Alexandria, Va.

Uniform Changes Coming

MORE than 10 changes in the Army's uniform policy are currently being staffed for an update of Army Regulation 670-1.

Items being revised include hair, nails, contact lenses, cell phones, pagers, bloused boots, headgear, "camelbacks," regimental distinctive insignia, and physical fitness uniform wear and pregnancy clothing, said MSG Kittie Messman, the uni-

form policy noncommissioned officer in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel.

Until the revised regulation is signed by the secretary of the Army, the 1992 version of the regulation is still in effect.

Under the upcoming regu-

lation only one electronic device will be authorized for wear on the uniform in the performance of official duties. The device may be either a cell phone or pager — not both.

Messman is the principal advisor for changes to the uni-

form policy, but she said the changes that are being staffed came from recommendations.

"We depend a lot on leaders in the field," Messman said. "They know the young soldiers of today. I get their input on when it's time to allow something that wasn't allowed before, or when something starts becoming a distraction and needs to be addressed."

People usually have the hardest time accepting the grooming policies, Messman said. "We don't want to rob people of their individuality," she said. "But the Army has never professed to be a leader in fashion. Our goal is to create a conservative, professional image, and some of the more trendy styles will not accomplish that goal."

Highlights of the changes include:

■ Dreadlocks are prohibited for all soldiers. Prohibited hair dye colors include purple, blue, pink, green, orange, bright fire-engine red and neon colors.

■ Applied colors must look natural on the individual soldier. Women are authorized to wear braids and cornrows; baldness is authorized for males,

either natural or shaved.

■ Males are not authorized to wear nail polish, and they must keep nails trimmed to the tip of the finger. Females must keep nails trimmed no longer than 1/4 inch, as measured from the fingertip. Two-tone or multi-tone manicures and nail designs are prohibited. Prohibited nail polish colors include the same colors as for hair.

■ Commanders may authorize the use of a camouflage hydration system ("camelbacks") for field duty or on work details. Soldiers will not use these devices in a garrison environment, unless directed by the commander.

■ Sew-on insignia are now authorized for the desert BDUs; colors are khaki and spice-brown combinations.

■ Pregnant soldiers should wear the PT uniform until it becomes too small or too uncomfortable. At that time, pregnant soldiers may wear civilian equivalent workout attire. Leaders will not require soldiers to purchase larger PT uniforms to accommodate the pregnancy.

For details visit www.odcsp.army.mil/directorates/hr/pr/uniform.asp. — ARNEWS



Nail polish is prohibited for male soldiers, and females may not wear fire-engine red, two-tone or multi-tone designs.

Veterans News

Home Loan Ceiling Raised; Reserve Loan Authority Extended

AN act recently passed by Congress and signed by President George W. Bush increases the guarantee on Department of Veterans Affairs home loans from \$50,750 to \$60,000.

The increase means eligible veterans can use their loan benefits to purchase homes costing as much as \$240,000 without a down payment. Many lenders will make VA no-down-payment loans for four times the maximum guarantee amount, said Judy Caden, deputy director of VA's Loan Guaranty Service.

The act also changed the Native American veterans housing loan program, assistance for specially adapted housing and home loans for National Guardsmen and Reservists.

VA's direct-loan program for American Indians assists those vets buying on trust land, she noted. VA issues the loan, not a private lender, so the program's different from regular government home loans.

The act extends the nine-year-old program for four years, to Dec. 31, 2005. The program's loan ceiling is \$80,000, except in certain high-cost areas where VA has approved up to \$120,000, she said. Loan interest rates are competitive with the mortgage market, she added.

The act also increases specialty housing grants from \$43,000 to \$48,000 for severely disabled veterans who need homes built to accommodate wheelchairs. The grant pays for such things as wider hallways, lowered kitchen appliances and counter tops, and bigger bathrooms, Caden said. Veterans can use both grants and regular VA guaranteed loans to cover the total costs of their home purchases, she said.

Another grant program for housing adaptations for less seriously disabled vets had its ceiling raised to \$9,250 — up from \$8,250, she pointed out. "The money is for some blind veterans and amputees who need extra help," she said.

The new law also extends housing loans for National Guard and Reserve personnel from September 2007 to Sept. 30, 2009. Reserve-component personnel are authorized the same home loan guarantees as active-duty personnel. — *American Forces Press Service*

Travel News

Frequent-Flier Miles Can Now Be Kept

THE 2002 Defense Authorization Act now allows official travelers to accept promotional items, including frequent-flier miles, and use them for personal travel.

According to the new law, "any promotional items through official travel belong to the traveler," said Dwight Moore, staff attorney at U.S. Transportation Command and a principle writer of the proposal. He said TRANSCOM recommended the change to Congress.

Mileage received by service members and federal employees before the bill was passed is also "grandfathered," Moore said. People who have accumulated mileage in frequent-flier accounts through official travel over the past years own all of that mileage, he said.

Moore explained that frequent-traveler benefits include points or miles, upgrades, or access to carrier clubs or facilities.

The change in the law was the result of a legislative proposal forwarded by TRANSCOM in 1999 as part of its yearly package of proposals for consideration by the Department of Defense and Congress, Moore said.

The proposal went to all federal agencies for coordination and comment, and eventually was sponsored by legislators.

One stipulation in the law is that government travelers cannot accept special promotional items that are not available to the general public.

"The promotional material must be obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and must be at no additional government cost," according to implementing instructions from the Per Diem, Travel And Transportation Allowance Committee, a DOD activity.

Local travel offices can provide more information on the new law, Moore said. — *TRANSCOM News Service*

Repairing the Pentagon

Story and Photos by SSG Alberto Betancourt



Salvaged limestone blocks await cleaning.



THE towering 72-foot crane looked like a huge dinosaur as it slammed its jaw into a portion of the Pentagon's demolished "Wedge One" and consumed more than 5,000 pounds of concrete and debris in one "bite."

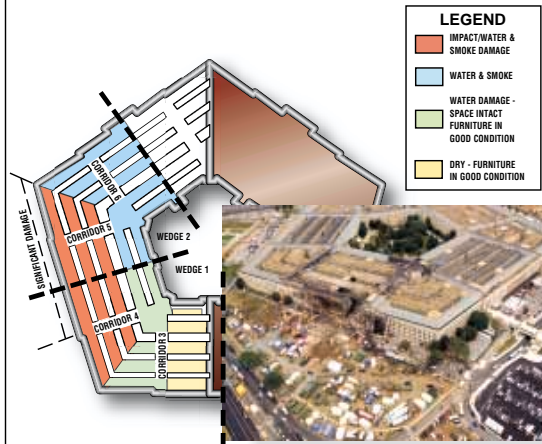
"Aggressive renovation" is Lee Evey's response to the Sept. 11 attack on America's defense hub. The Pentagon's renovation manager plans to have the building's personnel gazing out windows of newly rebuilt offices by the first anniversary of the terrorist attack, he said.

"This building is still standing, and what was destroyed is coming back fast," he said.

Evey said it's unlikely the reconstruction will be completed by the anniversary date, but he wants workers to be able to look out their windows and watch the dedication of a permanent memorial to the Pentagon victims

(Left) Workers use water to cool the still-smoldering wreckage.

AREAS WHERE IMMEDIATE WORK IS BEING PERFORMED



Source: Pentagon Renovation Program

"We have to go to the same limestone quarry in Indiana to get stone to match what was used in the initial construction phase in 1941."

appropriated \$1.2 billion toward just such a renovation, only 20 percent of which — including Wedge One — had been completed by the time of the attack.

The Pentagon was built of reinforced concrete, Eaton said, to save steel for battleships during WWII. Part of the renovation involved adding structural steel to reinforce the outer walls. That, in part, helped save a lot of lives during the tragedy.

"The structural steel reinforcements kept portions of the building's C, D and E corridors from collapsing for almost 35 minutes after the plane hit," he said. "Those crucial minutes allowed many people to escape."

Evey said the tragedy could have been much worse.

"We believe that the steel reinforcement dramatically slowed the plane as it entered the building and prevented it from penetrating further," he said.

Today, the construction team that has resumed renovation of the Pentagon at an accelerated pace must still adhere to numerous requirements intended to ensure that the building's original design and composition are not compromised.

"We have to go to the same limestone quarry in Indiana to get stone to match what was used in the initial construction phase in 1941," said Eaton.

He said pieces of limestone that have been removed from the building

scheduled for Sept. 11 of this year.

Since the attack, construction teams have been working around the clock to mend the historic edifice, Evey said.

"The building actually looks worse now than it did immediately after the airliner crashed into it," said Brett Eaton, a spokesman for the Pentagon Renovation Team.

Eaton said the team is taking down about 400,000 of the building's 6.5 million square feet — an amount that pales in comparison to the structure's overall size.

Designated a National Historical Landmark in 1992, the sprawling five-sided building hadn't undergone a major renovation since it was completed in 1943. In 1994 Congress

(Left) Construction crews have been working around the clock since Sept. 11 to restore the historic building.



America's Lasting Monument

Story by SSG Alberto Betancourt

are being cleaned and saved so they can be donated to museums, service academies and the different military branches for use in memorials or historical archiving.

The team must also consider security issues.

Eaton said security enhancement for the Pentagon initially included blast-proof windows. However, the windows were designed to protect people from an external blast, not from an internal one.

"The windows weigh 1,600 pounds each," said Eaton. "Some people who tried to get out the windows couldn't, so they had to go further into the building and out a permanent exit. As we redesign, emergency-exit-operable windows will be part of our agenda."

He said several contractors make up the Pentagon renovation team, including KCE, a structural contractor that engineered repairs at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

"The boss has challenged the renovation team to meet the 2002 anniversary deadline," said Eaton. One way he's doing this is by sharing the numerous "thank you" letters the team received from people who were inside the Pentagon during the attack.

One very emotional letter came from a Pentagon employee, who said: "I turned 53 today. I wouldn't have been able to celebrate my birthday if you hadn't put in the blast-resistant windows. Thank you so much."

"We are all committed to this project. We want everyone back in their offices by Sept. 11," said Eaton, as a line of construction workers passed a "United We Stand" banner draped over a fence that formed a perimeter around the site.

As work on Wedge One continues, the construction team continues renovating wedges two through five. They're targeted for completion in 2012. □

SIXTY-one years before the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, engineers broke ground in Arlington County, Va., paving the way for construction of the world's largest office building.

Carl Benckert was 14 years old in 1941. The retired government employee, who now lives in Fort Pierce, Fla., lived near the construction site near the banks of the Potomac River. He vividly remembers the piercing sounds of heavy equipment grinding and pounding the earth.

"You could tell there was something fascinating going on," he said. "There were so many cement-mixers and other trucks, and just so much concrete."

Back then, Benckert lived about a mile from where pile-drivers pounded columns of reinforced concrete into the ground.

"It was a night-and-day operation," he said. "At night, the construction crews' lights brightened up the sky so much, the site could be seen from miles away."

To consolidate and centralize joint-service missions under the War Department, forerunner of today's Department of Defense, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a bill in 1941 appropriating funds for the construction of a sprawling building that would accommodate thousands of people. Today, that building — the Pentagon — is a National Historical Landmark.

Despite the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which drew our country into World War II, workers on the home front finished the five-sided building in 16 months at a cost of \$83 million. Besides having five sides, it has five floors and is surrounded by five roads.

Brett Eaton, public information specialist for the Pentagon Renovation Program, said the building covers 29 acres and has 17.5 miles of corridors.

"The structure is twice as large as the merchandise mart in Chicago and has three times the floor space of the Empire State Building in New York," he said. It rests on 41,492 concrete piles that, if laid horizontally, would stretch 200 miles.



Employees' cars pack the south parking area of the newly completed Pentagon (note the loading platform in the background).



By July of 1942 construction work on the building's northwest side was well underway.

The magnificent building is a gigantic and lasting monument to the American spirit of unity during peace and war.

SGT Alex Desir, a member of the 3rd U.S. Infantry's Company C at Fort Myer, Va., was a Pentagon tour guide for 11 months before the terrorist attack. Besides escorting visitors to the building's more interesting sites, like the Hall of Heroes and the Women's Corridor, Desir shared historical "tidbits" with his guests.

"A lot of people don't know that the hot-dog stand in our center courtyard was called 'Café Ground Zero' during the Cold War," he said. "I also like to tell people that the structure was



This aerial view depicts the first two Pentagon "spokes" under construction.

predominately made from limestone, and not marble, because most of the world's marble comes from Italy, and we didn't want to fund their war efforts."

The magnificent building is a gigantic and lasting monument to the

American spirit of unity during peace and war.

"We never realized how big it was until it was completed," Benckert said. "This was intended to be something that was going to be there for eternity. It is just awesome." □

ART FROM THE HEART



Story by SSG Alberto Betancourt
Photos by Paul Disney

"The wonderful pieces of artwork, the numerous letters, they all show the children care about us. This really makes us feel very good."

SOLIDARITY spread through American schools as children picked up crayons, paint brushes and pens to convey their sadness, fear, anger and hope following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Richard Siegesmund, a University of Georgia professor of art education, said children often experience emotions they can't initially put into words, but can express through visual art.

"The colors children use to express themselves through art often can later help them to verbalize what they're feeling," he said.

Today thousands of posters and other artworks that decorate miles of corridors and hallways inside the Pentagon vividly express what American children are feeling.

One specific piece of artwork that's enhanced with comments and signatures stirs the emotions of SGM Steve Wilson, who works in the Office of the Chief of Chaplains.

"It tugs at my heart every time I walk by it," Wilson said of the 4X10-foot poster created by students at Colorado's Columbine High School. "Here are people from the site of one

national tragedy reaching out to reassure those affected by another national tragedy."

Barbara Grimes, a counselor at Cardinal Forest Elementary School in Springfield, Va., also used the tragedy as a platform to arouse patriotism and encourage students to get involved in community service. It wasn't very hard, she said.

"The emotions the students felt after the terrorist attacks were so overwhelming," she said. "That they were able to do something to express both their sadness and support made them very proud."

Grimes said the children

Today thousands of posters and other artworks that decorate miles of corridors and hallways inside the Pentagon vividly express what American children are feeling.

began by drawing patriotic artwork on the brown bags that were used to store lunches for rescue workers at the Pentagon during the days after the attack. When she saw the artwork, the idea to make a quilt was born.

"Quilting is my hobby," she said. "I felt the children's artwork needed to be preserved, so we decided to put it on a quilt."

Sixty students from the second through sixth grades participated in the 80-hour project to create the quilt, which is slightly larger than a twin bed. The quilt speaks volumes about the children's feelings, Grimes said.

She and her students are now writing letters to soldiers serving overseas, and around the country the support for the government and the troops continues.

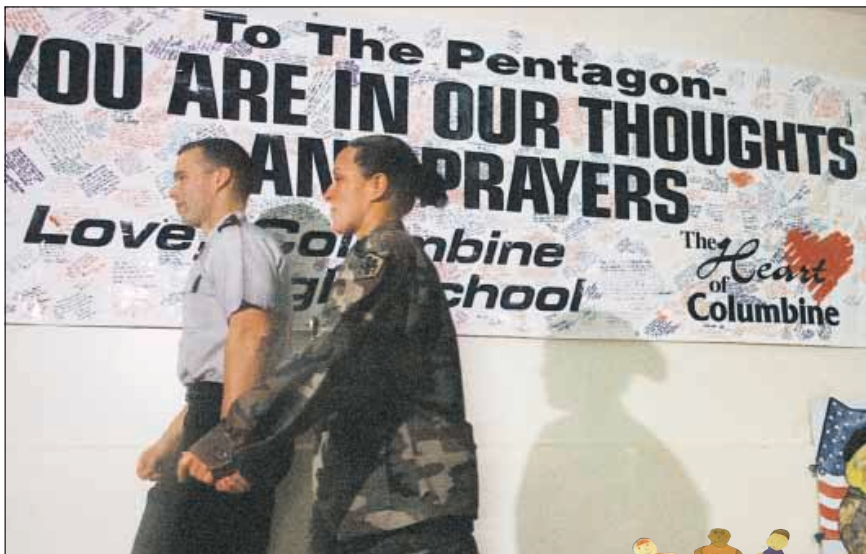
Students from Diamond Elementary School at Fort Stewart, Ga., for example, buried a time capsule with their writings and drawings. And thousands of dollars collected through fundraisers held by America's kids have been donated to relief efforts.

"It's extremely heartening to see the outpouring of support for our country," said June Forte of the Army's Public Inquiry and Analysis Directorate at the Pentagon. "The wonderful pieces of artwork, the numerous letters, they all show the children care about us. This really makes us feel very good." □



"I felt the children's artwork needed to be preserved, so we decided to put it on a quilt."

Sixty students participated in the 80-hour project to create the memorial quilt, which is slightly larger than a twin bed.



Of the thousands of posters and other artworks that decorate miles of corridors and hallways inside the Pentagon, perhaps none is as affecting as the 4X10-foot poster created by the students of Colorado's Columbine High School.





The GI Bill can be used to pay for the cost of a college degree at a traditional university.

Cashing In On the GI Bill

Story and Photos by SFC Lisa Beth Snyder

EVERY year thousands of people throw away money that could help them earn even more money.

These people are veterans who honorably served their country in the armed forces. The money they are throwing away is their GI Bill education benefits.

Only 57 percent of veterans eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill education benefits have used them, said Terry Jemison, a Department of Veterans Affairs spokesman. In 2001 the VA helped pay for the education or training of 291,848 veterans and active-duty personnel, 82,283 National Guard members and Reservists, and 46,917 survivors and dependents.

The VA, in a study done by Klemm Analysis Group, found that veterans who use their education benefits have lower unemployment and higher

earnings than those who do not use their benefits.

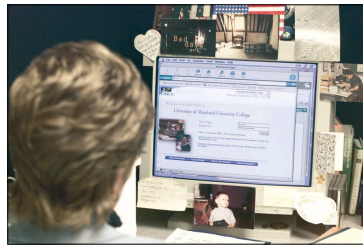
The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in the first quarter of 2001 men over the age of 25 with a bachelor's degree made a median average of \$400 more a week than those with just a high school diploma.

Studies say a common reason veterans forfeit their investment of \$1,200 — which can net them up to \$28,800 in education benefits — is a lack of time and money. The GI Bill education benefits must be used within 10 years of leaving active duty.

Veterans, such as Beth Reece, can use the GI Bill to pay for classes offered online.

"With this job and spending time with my family, I won't have time in the next 10 years to go to college," said Wayne V. Hall, echoing what is often a common reason for not using the benefit.

Then Hall, who recently left the Army after 11 years and took a job as



Veterans and active-duty service members use their GI Bill benefits to pay for classes at Park University's program at Fort Belvoir, Va.

civilian editor of the newspaper at Fort Belvoir, Va., talked with his wife and an education counselor and decided to finish his degree in journalism.

However, SPC Casandra C. Brewster, one of Hall's staff writers, plans to use her GI Bill money for technical certification. She hopes to have her bachelor's degree in communication finished before she leaves the Army next year.

This will be the second time Brewster has left active duty. She came back three years ago, after three years of Reserve duty, because she had left active duty nine days short of qualifying for her MGIB benefits.

Beth A. Reece, now a civilian writer and editor for the Army, said she joined the Army because her parents couldn't afford to pay for her college.

Before the then 17-year-old headed off to Fort Dix, N.J., for basic training, her parents talked to her about her military benefits, including the Montgomery GI Bill.

"They were concerned that I wouldn't sign up for that benefit," she said.

Reece transferred from her civil service job in Wiesbaden, Germany, to Washington, D.C., in March 2000 so she could work on her bachelor's degree.

"I pay up front," Reece said. Payments from the VA arrive about one and half to two months after she sends in the paperwork.

However, Reece said she is glad she has the Montgomery GI Bill despite all the paperwork and the slow payment time, because it pays for a little more than half of her out-of-state

When the current version of veterans education benefits was enacted, the purpose included recruitment and retention, as well as helping service members' readjustment to civilian life.



A student seeks help from a professor in a traditional classroom setting.

tuition at the University of Maryland.

"It would be pretty stupid not to use it," Reece said. "I would have had an enormous loan, which would have taken me years to pay off."

Veterans' education benefits were first offered in the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, the original GI Bill. When the current version of veterans' education benefits was enacted, the purpose included recruitment and retention, as well as helping service members' readjustment to civilian life.

William G. Susling, the VA's assistant director of education services, said that current GI Bill education payments are not enough to cover the costs of being a commuter student at a state university.

"You need to have something to

help someone readjust instead of going into debt," he said.

Congress has proposed legislation to enhance the benefits during the last few sessions. Passed in 2001 were an increase in monthly benefits to \$650 from \$528 for full-time students, payment for certification and licensure exams, and lifting the prohibition against active-duty service members receiving tuition assistance and GI Bill payments concurrently.

In December legislation was enacted to raise the monthly benefits for full-time students to \$800 effective Jan. 1, 2002; \$900 effective Oct. 1, 2002; and \$985 effective Oct. 1, 2003. Moreover, veterans attending high-tech, high-cost courses will be able to receive an accelerated payment of their benefits effective Oct. 1, 2002. □

Using the Montgomery GI Bill

Story by SFC Lisa Beth Snyder

The Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty was established in 1984 to help veterans return to civilian life after their honorable service in the armed forces.

Who's Eligible for the MGIB?

There are four categories of veterans who may be eligible for benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill.

Category 1

Entered active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985, served continuously for three years and contributed \$100 a month for the first 12 months of active duty.

Category 2

Had remaining entitlement under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance on Dec. 31, 1989, and had served on active duty between July 1, 1985, and June 30, 1988.

Category 3

Separated involuntarily after Feb. 2, 1991, or separated voluntarily under either the Voluntary Separation Incentive or Special Separation Benefit program. Veterans in this category must have contributed \$1,200 to the MGIB program before they were discharged.

Category 4

Contributed to the post-Vietnam era Veterans Educational Assistance Program and were on active duty with money in their education account on Oct. 9, 1996. Veterans must have elected to participate in the MGIB program by Oct. 9, 1997, and must have contributed \$1,200.

In addition...

Veterans must have a high school diploma or equivalent, or have completed 12 college semester hours toward a degree, before they are eligible for Montgomery GI Bill benefits. They must also have received honorable discharges.

The program pays benefits for 36 months of full-time college attendance or its equivalent, up to a maximum of \$800 a month.

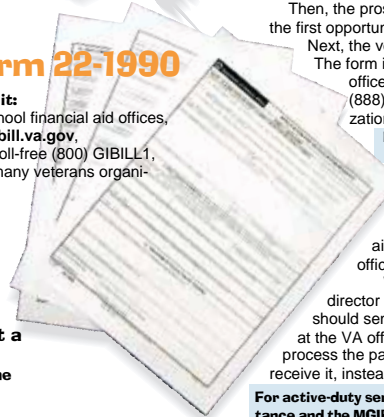
For the exact requirements for the Montgomery GI Bill, go to www.gibill.va.gov/education/c30pam.htm or call toll-free (888) GIBILL1.



VA Form 22-1990

Where to get it:

- at most school financial aid offices,
- at www.gibill.va.gov,
- by calling toll-free (800) GIBILL1,
- and from many veterans organizations.



What's Covered?

THE Montgomery GI Bill pays for more than just schooling at a college or university.

For veterans and service members who have paid into the program, the Montgomery GI Bill offers \$28,800 (as of Jan. 1, 2002) for 36 months of full-time college attendance or its equivalent for the following training:

- Post-secondary degrees at approved colleges and universities.
- Business colleges.
- Technical or vocational courses.
- Apprenticeship or job training.
- Flight training.
- Correspondence courses.
- Licensing and certification tests (go to www.gibill.va.gov/Education/LCVets.htm for the list of such tests eligible for GI Bill payment).

The Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve, which pays for education and training of selected Reserve and Guard members, covers all of the above training except for licenses and certifications. Some states also offer tuition assistance benefits to members of the National Guard.

Applying for Benefits

Veterans and service members who wish to use their Montgomery GI Bill benefits begin the process by talking to their prospective school's financial aid personnel, Department of Veterans Affairs officials said.

Then, the prospective GI Bill beneficiary should enroll at the first opportunity.

Next, the veteran should complete VA Form 22-1990.

The form is available at most school financial aid offices, at www.gibill.va.gov, by calling toll-free (888) GIBILL1 and from many veterans organizations.

For veterans or service members who are not using tuition-assistance benefits, the

next step is to take the completed form and their DD Form 214 copy 4 (veterans only) to the veterans-affairs representative at their school's financial aid office or job-training program. The school official will fill out VA Form 22-1999.

William G. Susling, the VA's assistant director of education services, said the school should send off all the forms together so they arrive at the VA office together. This enables VA personnel to process the paperwork for payment when they first receive it, instead of waiting for all three forms to arrive.

For active-duty service members using both tuition assistance and the MGIB under the new top-up program, there are three steps to receiving payment.

- 1 Request tuition assistance from an education counselor at the post education-services office.
- 2 Fill out VA Form 22-1990. Type or write "top-up" under 1A, "MGIB-Active Duty" block.
- 3 Send a copy of the approved tuition-assistance form and VA Form 22-1990 to the VA regional processing office. Addresses for the regional processing offices are available on the GI Bill website or by calling (888) GIBILL1.

We Were So Soldiers...

Starring Mel Gibson as LTC Harold G. Moore, commander of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, the film is based on the book *"We Were Soldiers Once... And Young,"* written by Moore, now a retired lieutenant general, and Joseph L. Galloway, former United Press International war correspondent and current U.S. News and World Report senior writer.

Story by
Heike Hasenauer

MEL Gibson's piercing blue eyes scanned the moonlit forest as he sprang from the UH-1 helicopter hovering above "Landing Zone X-Ray."

He crouched low as he raced for the nearby woodland, crunching the tall elephant grass under his boots and aiming his M-16 rifle into the darkness ahead.

All photographs by Stephen Vaughn, Paramount Pictures, unless otherwise credited.



Actor Mel Gibson (left) portrays LTC Harold Moore, who commanded the U.S. ground troops engaged in the first large-scale ground battle of the Vietnam War.

Earlier, in the recreated "Ia Drang Valley of South Vietnam's Central Highlands," simulated 105mm artillery and machine-gun fire, grenades and aerial rockets had slammed the LZ's perimeter to eliminate potential North Vietnamese army defenders. Pyrotechnics had illuminated the still summer sky and echoed from the towering Santa Lucia Mountain range at Fort Hunter-Liggett, Calif.

The sprawling Army training post, about two hours south of Monterey, served as producer-director Randall Wallace's stage, and this particular scene depicted the first night of a torturous three-day battle that began on Nov. 14, 1965. It's part of a new Vietnam War movie called *"We Were Soldiers,"* to be released in spring 2002.

The film, starring Gibson as LTC Harold G. Moore, commander of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, is based on the book *"We Were Soldiers Once... And Young,"* written by Moore, now a retired lieutenant



During the filming, a "soldier" helps a "wounded" comrade to a waiting medevac helicopter. In the real battle, 79 soldiers were killed and 130 were wounded.

general, and Joseph L. Galloway, former United Press International war correspondent and current U.S. News and World Report senior writer.

The movie focuses on the first big battle of the Vietnam War, when some 450 of Moore's men were inserted into the Ia Drang Valley at LZ X-Ray, an area the size of a football field, and were almost immediately surrounded by 2,000 NVA soldiers. But against all odds, and at great cost, they never gave up.

"They didn't even think about giving up," Moore said.

"They loved each other. And they fought and died for each other. I want this movie to be about them."

"The screenplay is the best it can be," Galloway said. It begins with the French in

Indochina in 1954, with the final act of the French defeat at Mang

Yang Pass, not far from where the Ia Drang battles took place.

In the scene from 1954 the Viet Minh, under North Vietnamese Maj. Nguyen An, destroy a French army battle group. The scene then shifts to Fort Benning, Ga., and the creation of the 11th Air Assault Division, which becomes the "airmobile" 1st Cavalry Div. Wives and children are introduced, and viewers get some insight into soldiers' family life in the 1960s.

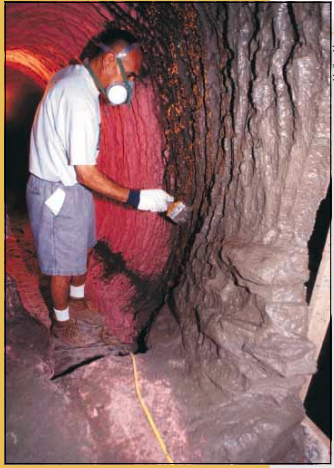
Next come battle scenes and cutbacks to Fort Benning, as telegrams bring the dreaded news that loved ones have been killed.

"*We Were Soldiers*" will certainly be as historically accurate as possible, Moore said. "Randy Wallace had a hell of a job condensing the book that introduced more than 400 soldiers into a two-and-a-half-hour movie." Wallace had to limit the cast to about 15 characters, eight or nine of them core characters.

"The movie will be 80 percent real and 20 percent Hollywood," Moore said. "Randy is portraying the actions



"NVA regulars" charge during the filming. In the heavily forested Ia Drang Valley, U.S. and enemy troops sometimes came upon each other without warning.



A prop-maker paints the interior of the polymerized polyurethane "tunnel" created by set designers to replicate an underground NVA command bunker.

Heiko Hasenauer

"I learned a lot about Hal Moore and have a lot of respect for him," said Gibson, who visited him and his wife, Julie, at their home in Auburn, Ala., in January 2001, after checking out the proposed shooting location at Fort Benning, where opening scenes of the film were shot.

"He had to make split-second decisions under the toughest circumstances, knowing those decisions could cost lives," Gibson said. "He never lost control."

Gibson said Moore sent him books and letters, referencing his Vietnam experiences, "and we've sat and talked a few times. I just like hanging out with him. He's a great guy."

"He gave me advice about the day he took off for LZ X-Ray," Gibson said. "He said, 'I jumped in the chopper. I fired up a cigar. I looked at the pilot, MAJ Bruce Crandall, who also had a cigar. Then, I gave Crandall a thumbs-up, signaling him to take off.' He had a lot of gestures."

Greg Kinnear plays Crandall, who commanded Company A, 229th Assault Helicopter Bn., the unit that

airlifted Moore's battalion into the Ia Drang Valley with its 16 UH-1D Hueys.

Others in the cast include Madeleine Stowe, as Moore's wife, Julie; Barry Pepper as Galloway; Sam Elliot as SGM Basil Plumley; and Chris Klein as 2LT John Lance Geoghegan, who was killed while attempting to rescue one of his wounded men.

"Physically, this movie isn't different from others I've made," Gibson said. "A particular challenge, though, is that this is closer to home; in other war movies, the people who were there aren't living. Previous Vietnam War movies focused on the negative aspects of the war — the drugs, the political problems. This movie will be a monument to the courage and heroism of the Vietnam veterans."

"I can't get flashbacks, because I wasn't there," said Gibson. "I was just a little kid. But I understand what we're doing, and the desperate nature of the situation the soldiers at Ia Drang were in. I met nine of the survivors. They really helped me understand what they experienced. I'd like to say: This time, we'll get it right."

"I want this film to be a film of reconciliation and healing, a time for Americans — those who wanted us to

of soldiers in battle and the impact of the war back home. The latter dimension has never been fully covered in a movie. And he's portraying the Vietnamese soldier as a damn good soldier, who fought well."

Before signing over movie rights to their book, the authors wanted assurance that the movie would not focus on the politics of the war, but serve as a tribute to the many brave young men who fought and died in Vietnam.

To that end, Galloway asked Wallace if he believes in heroes.

Wallace, who'd just finished making "Braveheart," replied: "Have you seen 'Braveheart'? If you have, you know what I believe in."

Gibson will certainly do the story justice," Moore added. "He's the best actor in the world," with movies that include "Lethal Weapon," and its sequels, "Conspiracy Theory," and, more recently, "The Patriot" and "What Women Want" to his credit.

"He's drawn to films about how ordinary men perform in extraordinary circumstances," said his publicist, Rachel Aberly.

Heiko Hasenauer



The UH-1H helicopters used as set dressing during the filming at Fort Hunter-Liggett were provided by the California National Guard.

The production company has gone to great lengths to ensure that the film is historically accurate.



Production crews worked hard to obtain authentic period weapons, uniforms and equipment — such as the medical equipment viewers will see in the "first-aid tent."

Heiko Hasenauer

pull out of the war and those who supported the war — to forgive each other," Wallace said.

The production company has gone to great lengths to ensure that the film is historically accurate, said Arthur Burson, a former XVIII Airborne Corps soldier who served in Operation Desert Storm and is an extra in the film.

Most extras who appear in the movie are Fort Benning soldiers or California National Guard personnel, but active-duty soldiers from California and former soldiers also got involved. Cambodians who reside in California play the roles of Vietnamese soldiers.

CPT Brian Linville, an active-duty soldier assigned to the 229th Military Intelligence Bn., at California's Presidio of Monterey, took leave to be in the film.

During a week of night shooting, Linville, who is studying Arabic at the Defense Language Institute, spent time walking around with a make-believe grazed-shoulder wound, bloodied with Karo syrup and red dye. In the film,

he's a wounded soldier being extracted from LZ X-Ray. In another scene, he plays SPC Gray, a soldier at the battalion base camp who cheers on the helicopters going into battle.

MAJ Lee Reynolds, a Reservist with the 361st Press Camp Headquarters at Fort Totten, N.Y., landed a job as an assistant technical advisor to the film, based on his background in air-assault operations. Reynolds also helped run the actors' boot camp and has a small speaking role as a door gunner on Greg Kinnear's helicopter. The part-time actor, who has appeared in regional TV commercials in New York, works as entertainment coordinator for the New York Mets.

As the Defense Department project officer on the film, SFC William Homann played a significant role in the film's production, said Wallace.

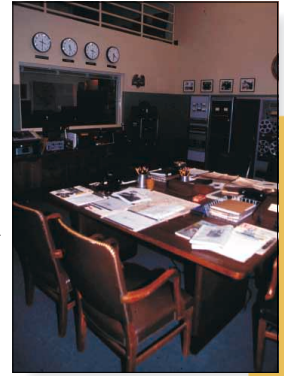
Homann provided the production company with points of contact for research, and coordinated with active Army and National Guard units for personnel, equipment and land. He also located technical advisors for the film — former Ranger Training Brigade

instructor Jason Powell and current instructor CPT Chip Colbert. "The director might tell me he wants a formation of soldiers," Colbert said. "Powell and I show the actors how to carry, load and fire their weapons, and explain how they interact with each other for support. Then we monitor the filming. If it's bogus, we correct it."

Colbert reviewed the film script for accuracy, too, and recommended a number of dialog changes. He also arranged a two-week basic training course at Fort Benning for the principal actors and producer-director Wallace.

"It won't be part of the movie," Colbert said, "but it was conducted to familiarize the actors with how the Army operates."

The 75-member production design team spent four months researching the Ia Drang Valley battles before constructing and painting sets and collect-



The film's equally authentic-looking "Saigon War Room" was built inside an auditorium at Fort Hunter-Liggett's headquarters building and furnished with period items.

"I want this film to be a film of reconciliation and healing, a time for Americans — those who wanted us to pull out of the war and those who supported the war — to forgive each other."



The mock headquarters of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, was constructed at Fort Hunter-Liggett. Production crews planted some 600 trees in and around the sets.

ing set "dressings" such as vehicles and objects that would have been on hand at the time, said set decorator Gary Fettis.

Production designer Tom Sanders, who designed the sets for "Saving Private Ryan" and "Braveheart," took charge of creative design for this movie," Fettis said.

Sanders' greatest challenge was "finding an icon of a mountain with a valley below it that came close to the Ia Drang Valley," he said. He was ultimately responsible for some 50 sets, collectively, at Forts Hunter-Liggett and Benning.

At Fort Benning, period authenticity required the addition of porches onto existing quarters; duplicating the interior of Moore's house inside an aircraft hangar; and making rifle range, aircraft hangar and guard shack modifications, Homann said. A huge parade scene — the send-off of troops to Vietnam — was filmed at the post's Dough Boy Stadium.

Prop-maker foreman Michael Crowe was tasked to build the underground command bunker of the NVA commander. Constructed inside a Quonset hut at Fort Hunter-Liggett, the bunker was fabricated from painted 8-foot-tall, 2-foot-wide sheets of polymerized polyurethane. When completed, the "rock" tunnel was about 95 feet long and 32 feet wide.

In recreating the Ia Drang Valley landscape, the production crew's greens people planted 600 sycamore and beech trees that the post will be able to keep when filming is completed.

They also bought up all the elephant grass from all the nurseries in California and planted it, Fettis said, eliminat-

ing Yellow Star Thistle, a destructive weed, in the process.

For the Camp Holloway site, set of 1st Bn., 7th Cav.'s headquarters, set crews positioned some 15,000 sandbags, Fettis said. And California's 63rd Reserve Support Command provided two-and-a-half-ton trucks as set dressing. The Saigon war room, recreated in the auditorium of the post's headquarters, boasted a huge, glass-encased tactical terrain board, 1960s-era communications equipment, and magazines, cigarette cases and furniture.

A company in Santa Paula, Calif., provided early Vietnam-era tents, mortar crates, medical supplies and tactical maps, Fettis said. And civilian aviators provided the six Hueys used in flying sequences, said aerial coordinator Cliff Fleming.

Visual effects supervisor Dave Goldberg, anticipating the challenge of creating a squadron of 22 helicopters, said: "We have six helicopters in the air at a time, so we'll shoot the real ones several times, then cut and paste them into the scene and use computer-generated helicopters."

A private owner in San Diego, Calif., and the Chinot Air Museum, also in California, each provided one



With the addition of actors, extras, vehicles and aircraft, the "base camp" built in the middle of a California valley realistically depicted the actual Vietnam location.

A1E Skyraider. The close-support fighter-bomber carried 500-pound bombs and napalm canisters in Vietnam, Fleming said. Hueys used as set dressing were provided by the Georgia and California National Guards. The latter also provided the only U.S. military aircraft that flies in the film, a CH-47 Chinook, and some M-101A howitzers used to recreate Firebase Falcon, which supported LZ X-Ray.

"We have a lot of battle footage that needs real tracers added," Goldberg said. "We'll capture that during a live-fire exercise and recreate it on a shot-by-shot basis in the computer." Some sound effects for the film were recorded from live-fire training events.

The film unit's armorer, Mike

Papac, who owns a company called Cinema Weaponry, furnished some 250 weapons, among them M-79 grenade launchers, M-60 machine guns, .45-cal. pistols and M-29A1 mortars. He also supplied M-16E1 rifles, the weapon developed after the M-16 and before the M-16A1.

"The M-16E1 didn't have a flash suppressor, so we tooled them to appear as though they fire live rounds, complete with muzzle flash," Papac said.

The Vietnamese used everything from U.S. to Russian and French weapons. So Papac also provided French MAT-49 submachine guns and MAS-36 rifles, and Russian PPSH-41 and PPS-43 submachine guns. "And because there are few actual AK-47s around, we manufactured those,"

Papac said. All the weapons were adapted to fire custom blank rounds.

Special effects coordinator Paul Lombardi said visuals for the film are mostly created with pyrotechnics. But high explosives, high-pressure air and gasoline are also used.

To simulate a napalm drop, for example, a real napalm canister was used as a model. Gasoline and blasting devices were used to atomize the gas, causing it to burn quickly.

For uniform accuracy, the film's costume designer, Mike Boyd, found actual period burlap and bought thousands of yards of the fabric. He had it dyed to just the right shade of green, and had uniforms made in various sizes.

One of his concerns was that uniforms worn by recently "inducted"



"Soldiers" scurry from a Huey that has just touched down in a "hot" landing zone. The film makers used computer-aided techniques to make six real helicopters look like a squadron of 22.

"Emotionally, it wasn't easy to boil the book down to a two-and-a-half-hour movie."

soldiers at Fort Benning had to look new. "In Vietnam, they had to look stone-washed," Boyd said. "So, we put a little Clorox in the machines when we washed them. And because we're shooting in sequence, we 'age' the uniforms, progressively making them sweaty, dirty and bloodied."

More than 1,000 uniforms and civilian-clothing items, and Viet Minh, French and NVA insignia, had to be made, Boyd said. Some 16,000 pieces of insignia were required for the send-off parade scene.

Before filming began, makeup artist Mike Mills developed "appliances" of foam latex. Made from molds of the actors' bodies, they were to be burned, bullet-riddled or severed during filming, so duplicates were on

hand. Mills also worked with a lot of corn-syrup-and-food-coloring "blood."

Wallace hopes that the countless hours of painstaking research and attention to detail will result in "a movie that conveys what the soldiers in Vietnam went through. It has the perspective of Moore, who led them, and Galloway, a civilian journalist, who observed them.

"Emotionally, it wasn't easy to boil the book down to a two-and-a-half-hour movie. But I've made peace with it," Wallace said. "Viewers will have to decide for themselves if I did the right thing." □

Moore called Gibson, seen here about to engage the "enemy," the "best actor in the world." The actor went to great lengths to accurately portray Moore in the film.



Pyrotechnic devices explode during the filming of a climactic battle scene. Many of the U.S. soldiers portrayed in the film were played by California Guard members and active-duty soldiers based in the state.

An Author's Quest

Story by Heike Hasenauer

UPI reporter Joseph L. Galloway arrived at Landing Zone X-Ray on the evening of the first day of battle, Nov. 14, 1965, after pleading with CPT Gregory Dillon to let him ride in aboard a resupply helicopter.

Earlier, at the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, command post, Galloway had just spoken to PFC Jimmy Nakayama when an American fighter mistakenly dropped napalm in the area. Nakayama and SP5 James Clark were hit. Galloway, with the help of another soldier, grabbed Nakayama's feet to carry him to safety.

"When I grabbed his feet, his boots just fell off, and I remember my hands touching raw bones," Galloway said, his eyes welling up with tears. "We carried him away screaming. I can still hear those screams."

Clark died soon after the incident. Nakayama died two days later.

"There was machine-gun fire going on over our heads, and Galloway just got up and ran to help Nakayama," said retired LTG Harold G. Moore, then a lieutenant colonel who commanded the battalion. "One of my medics got shot, but that didn't stop Galloway."

Galloway had earlier hitched a ride aboard another helicopter to a U.S. special forces camp under siege. Its commander, MAJ Charles Beckwith, told him the last thing he needed was a "damned reporter." He needed someone to man a machine gun.

Galloway got the job. After that battle ended, Beckwith gave Galloway an M-16 that he carried until the war ended in 1975.

On May 1, 1998, at Fort Bragg, N.C., the Army awarded Galloway a Bronze Star with "V" device for valor

for his actions in Vietnam. He's the first journalist to receive the award from the Army.

"That battlefield was the worst place I've ever been," said Galloway. "I'd been in other places in Vietnam, but never at that level of hand-to-hand combat and knowing my life depended on the soldiers around me. We were 20 miles in the middle of enemy territory, surrounded by a force 10 times larger than we were."

The three-day battle at Landing Zone X-Ray left 79 infantrymen and one Air Force pilot dead and another 130 men wounded, some of them horribly, Galloway said. "This happened all around me, in a space no bigger than a football field."

It was followed a day later, 14 miles away, by the battle at Landing Zone Albany, where 154 American troops were killed in an ambush.

The two battles were part of the 34-day Pleiku Campaign, which lasted from Oct. 23 to Nov. 26, 1965. Counting the skirmishes before and after the two major battles, 305 Americans died — more than in the entire Persian Gulf War, Galloway said.

"Hal Moore and I were determined before leaving the battlefield that we'd write a book about the Ia Drang battle," he said. "That was firmed up in 1976, when Hal was the Army's deputy chief of staff for personnel at the Pentagon, and I was on my way to be the UPI bureau chief in Moscow."

"Hal invited me to dinner before I left, and some of the Vietnam veterans were there. We shook hands, promising to do the book," Galloway said.

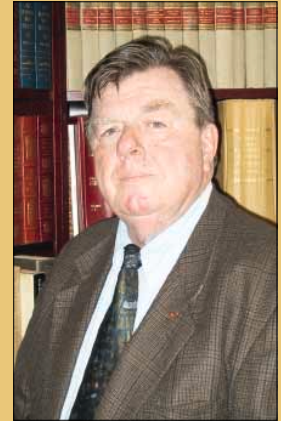
In 1980, after 15 years overseas with UPI, Galloway returned to the

States. Moore was retired and had gone to Colorado.

One day in 1982, "in the safest place I'd been in 15 years — my living room in Los Angeles — I was watching the sequel to 'American Graffiti.' At the end of the movie, you find out what became of the characters. The goofy kid with the glasses who couldn't get laid was drafted and assigned to the 1st Cav. Div.

"He runs from a mortar attack, is hit and vaporizes," Galloway said. "As I saw that, I found myself shaking. I didn't really know where that came from, but I knew if I didn't face it, it would destroy me. That's when I called Hal Moore."

He, too, was ready to write the book, Galloway said. "I flew to his house to talk about the project. From



Joseph L. Galloway

"We entered the project with the idea that it might not go anywhere; there might be two copies published, one for Hal's bookshelf and one for mine."

the beginning, we were both firm that we wanted to go back to Vietnam to conduct interviews with North Vietnamese officials, so we could present a complete picture. And we sent questionnaires to some 25 veterans whose addresses we had.

"We entered the project with the idea that it might not go anywhere; there might be two copies published, one for Hal's bookshelf and one for mine. We figured no one wanted to know about the Vietnam War," Galloway said.

At that time, too, the men agreed that all proceeds from the sale of the book would go to a scholarship fund for the children and grandchildren of soldiers killed in the Ia Drang Valley. That fund was created through the 1st Cav. Div. Association five years ago.

To date, some 400,000 copies of

"We Were Soldiers Once ... And Young" have been sold, and \$250,000 has gone into the fund. Additionally, on the first day of principal filming at Fort Benning, Ga. — where sets recreated the 1963 formation of the 11th Air Assault Div. — the movie's producers donated \$50,000 to the fund, Galloway said.

The book required 10 years of research, from 1982 to 1992. Its publication followed a U.S. News and World Report cover story by Galloway on Oct. 29, 1990, the 25th anniversary of the battles at Ia Drang.

Galloway's anniversary story appeared at a time when America was preparing for war in the Persian Gulf and hadn't reconciled thoughts about Vietnam, he said.

To his surprise, mail flew in by the bags full in response to the story, he

said. And it won the National Magazine Award in spring 1991.

"I was lucky I had such a good editor. When I asked him how much room he'd give me in the magazine for the story, he said 'as much as you need to tell the story. And don't leave out anyone you can make me care about,'" Galloway recalled. "I ran into the president of Random House publishing soon after. He told me the story would make a wonderful book, and he wanted to publish it."

In August 1991, he returned to the States after covering the Gulf War. It was a time when he rode across the desert in Iraq with soldiers of the 24th Infantry Div. "I thanked my lucky stars," he said, "we weren't attacking the North Vietnamese and prayed our soldiers wouldn't be put in an Ia Drang-like battle. I thought, 'These guys don't need to experience that.'"

He took leave from U.S. News and World Report, "and Moore moved into my house" on a farm outside Washington, D.C., Galloway said.

"We had all our stuff on the floor — papers, reports, diaries, letters, photos," he said. "And we started interviewing 20 people we knew and had addresses for. Every guy we found helped us find a buddy of his." Eventually, the two men interviewed some 250 veterans.

"What might seem surprising," Galloway said, "is that there was very little conflicting information from our sources. The events they experienced were so shocking, so traumatic, that they were seared into their memories."

"Two days before Christmas 1991, we delivered the manuscript, and the book was published on Nov. 11, 1992," Galloway said.

In their book, Moore and Galloway write:

It was a time "when we were young and confident and patriotic and our countrymen knew little and cared less



Galloway was awarded a Bronze Star with "V" device for valor for his actions in Vietnam. He's the first journalist to receive the award from the Army.

about our sacrifices.

"We were members of an elite, experimental combat division trained in the new art of airmobile warfare at the behest of President John F. Kennedy."

"We discovered in that depressing, hellish place, where death was our constant companion, that we loved each other. We killed for each other, we died for each other, and we wept for each other. And in time we came to love each other as brothers. In battle our world shrank to the man on our left and the man on our right and the enemy all around."

"We held each other's lives in our hands and we learned to share our fears, our hopes, our dreams as readily as we shared what little else good came our way."

The fighting set the stage for a war that dragged on for 10 painfully long years. By 1967, some 500,000 U.S. troops were on the ground in South

Vietnam. Three-thousand per month came back home in caskets.

The first big battle at Ia Drang was significant, in lessons learned, to both sides, Galloway said.

"The North Vietnamese wanted that battle. They wanted to test not only us, but our equipment," Galloway said, "so they had a historian walk down the Ho Chi Minh Trail during the battle to observe and write an after-action report that the North Vietnamese published and called 'How to Fight the American Helicopter.'"

"They learned the tactic 'grab 'em by the belt buckle,'" Galloway said. "We had it all in spades as far as air power, but they learned 'if you get close enough to grab their belt buckles, they can't drop the firepower because they'll kill themselves.'"

"The lessons we learned were the wrong ones," Galloway said, most notably and tragically U.S. officials' decision to send more troops into South Vietnam when they clearly

knew the war could only result in a stalemate. A kill ratio of 14:1 NVA versus U.S. soldiers seemed to justify the losses and trumpet the U.S. Army's search and destroy policy as a good one.

"The NVA had been fighting for years," Galloway continued. "Their determination was so much greater than ours. They could predict that at a certain time America would turn its back on the war."

Director-producer Randall Wallace first approached Moore and Galloway during a lecture they were giving at Virginia Military Institute several years ago. "After our book made the New York Times bestseller list, everyone wanted to make it a movie," Galloway said.

"People don't realize that when you sign over the rights to your book, you have no control," he added. "It's like giving your baby up for adoption; all you can do is pick the best possible parents. Wallace is the best." □



Simulated explosions light the California night during the filming of a scene in which U.S. and NVA troops engage each other at extremely close range.



Actors charge toward the "enemy" in a recreation of the sort of running firefight that characterized the first afternoon of the real battle.

A Commander Remembers

Story by Heike Hasenauer

I WAS the first man on the ground with the troops," said retired LTG Harold G. Moore, who commanded the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, during the November 1965 Ia Drang battle at Landing Zone X-Ray. "As I jumped out of the Huey, I looked up at the mountain and knew the enemy was there," he said. "It was ominously quiet."

Moore later learned that three battalions of fresh North Vietnamese soldiers had come down the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and were waiting.

"When the fight began, it was furious. The NVA troops came out intent on killing us all," Moore said. About 50 percent of his men were killed or seriously wounded.

"I had trained troopers for 14 months at Fort Benning, Ga., before deploying to Vietnam. We were all family," Moore said. "We were a good, well-disciplined battalion, but very understrength when we shipped out."

Because President Lyndon B. Johnson elected not to extend service tours, soldiers with 60 days or less remaining in service were not sent to Vietnam.

"Before we deployed, I lost 150 men I'd trained. When the battle began, we were short more than 250 men as a result," Moore said. "The commander in chief sent the 1st Cavalry Division to war understrength. That's shameful. That told me he was

interested in the political aspects — not in winning the war.

"With only 16 helicopters, it took us about four hours to get all our men on the ground," he added. "The first afternoon of the three-day battle was a running firefight — a run for survival — with Hueys coming in under fire trying to get the wounded out. There was a hell of a fight the next morning and night, and I realized we were in a historic battle.

"The NVA soldiers were good and well trained," Moore said. "I didn't know it at the time, but then LTC Nguyen An, their deputy commander, had been a major and commanded a regiment at Dien Bien Phu, where the French suffered a disastrous defeat in 1954.

"Joe Galloway, a war correspondent, came in the first night and stayed on the ground with us," Moore said. "At the end of the fight, we looked at each other and, in our minds, I think we knew we'd someday write a book about our experiences."

Moore was promoted to colonel in Vietnam and retired in 1977 as a lieutenant general. For the next four years he helped run a ski resort in Colorado. Then he began research on the book he and Galloway had agreed to write.

He made phone calls, listened to audio tapes and, in 1988, attended the first reunion of Ia Drang veterans. "As the veterans talked,"

Moore said, "they aroused memories in other former soldiers."

In 1990, before the 25th anniversary of the Ia Drang battle, Galloway's editors sent both him and Moore to



Retired LTG Harold Moore, who visited the California set in May 2001, provided valuable information that helped ensure the film's accuracy.

Vietnam to revisit the battlefield for a special anniversary story. They were determined to get the Vietnamese side of the story, too.

Among those Moore and Galloway interviewed were Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap, who led the NVA against the French at Dien Bien Phu, and Maj. Gen. Hoang Phuong, the director of military history for the People's Army of Vietnam.

A lieutenant colonel historian during the battle at Landing Zone X-Ray, Phuong told Moore and Galloway: "You were like frogs with your helicopters. We thought you had intelligence from our men because you landed right on top of them."

The men also talked to Vietnam's equivalent to the U.S. president. In 1990, following countless interviews with the soldiers who were at Ia Drang, and working from after-action reports, military history files, individual accounts, letters and photographs, Galloway wrote what became the cover story of U.S. News and World Report's Oct. 29, 1990, issue. It outshined 1,400 other entries to win the year's top news magazine story award.

After signing a book contract in

November 1991, the men returned to Vietnam again. This time they "had open doors everywhere," said Moore, "probably based on the candor of the USNWR story." This time they spoke to LTG An, among others.

The subsequent book was published in October 1992 and was on the New York Times best-seller list for three-and-a-half months, Moore said.

Director-producer Randall Wallace bought the book rights for a movie in late 1999, Moore said, after convincing the authors he was the man to do it.

When asked if he gave Mel Gibson any advice on how to portray him, Moore said: "Mel didn't ask me for advice, and I didn't give him any. He's a great mimic and a quick study, very perceptive, energetic and quick-witted. People are going to love him. They're going to hate war but love the American war hero.

"I hope soldiers who see the movie will get the lesson in their heads to never quit. Don't even think about losing," Moore said. "If you do, you've already lost. SGT Ernie Savage, who assumed command of 2nd Platoon, Company B, after his superiors were killed, never thought about losing even though the platoon was cut off from the rest of the company for a good part of the battle.

"I watched a scene of the cut-off platoon, when the platoon leader is wounded and SGT Carl Palmer, the senior-ranking NCO in my battalion below the grade of first sergeant, takes over," Moore said.

Palmer suffered a nonfatal wound to the head about an hour after his platoon's ordeal had begun. As he was lying on the ground, SP4 Galen Bungum helped Palmer put a bandage on the wound.

"Tell my wife I love her," Palmer told Bungum. Moments later, an NVA

soldier threw a hand grenade that landed and exploded behind Palmer. It killed him two days shy of his 40th birthday. It brought tears to my eyes," Moore said. "I wasn't ready for that.

"It was tough. It was like driving in a car with your family, and you're in an accident and two of your kids get killed," Moore said.

Equally tough was answering a question from "the daughter of one of my men who's portrayed in the movie," Moore said. "'How am I going to watch my dad get killed?'" she asked.

Viewers will have to decide for themselves if they can handle the reality. □



Gibson, seen here leading a "charge" during the filming, spent time with Moore before production began in order to ensure that his portrayal of the retired lieutenant general was as realistic and accurate as possible.



Through its focus on about 15 characters, "We Were Soldiers" gives viewers an accurate and ultimately inspiring look at the men who fought in the actual battle.

Bakken is one of the world's fastest drivers in the push start.

TWO years ago **CPT Scott Price** knew little about police work, fighting fires or dealing with mass casualties. Now the 31-year-old Virginia Army National Guard soldier and company commander helps police supervisors, fire chiefs and emergency medical supervisors across the country respond to crises created by weapons of mass destruction.

For months before the Winter Olympics at Salt Lake City, Utah, Price helped the various groups prepare for security—a phenomenal undertaking, given the events of Sept. 11. Olympic officials considered virtually every possible avenue of approach terrorists or copycat criminals could take.

Price is one of a dozen certified instructors for the National Sheriffs' Association who train emergency-responder executives to respond to their worst nightmares—a nuclear explosion, poison gas or deadly organisms intended to hurt or kill a mass of people or disrupt normal activities.

Two-member teams have trained emergency responder managers in 30 states during the past two-and-a-half years, said retired New Jersey policeman Ed Willevier, the sheriff association's project director.

Price, a full-time Guard officer, is also telling leaders of this country's civilian emergency agencies how the National Guard's new state civil support teams are prepared to help them cope with a crisis as bad as or worse than the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

"I don't have a background in emergency services," said Price, who graduated from the Virginia Military Institute with a degree in history and English. "It's been quite an education for me since I took on this job in 1999. I've learned that no one person or agency has all the answers. We all have to work together to keep our communities safe." — **MSG Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Office**



Price: Training first responders.

EVERY seasoned athlete appreciates the home-court advantage, especially when a championship is on the line. Utah Army National Guard **SPC Jill Bakken** is no exception. Park City, Utah, is where she lives with her mother. And in February she competed in the championship of her life, the two-woman bobsled, during the XIX Winter Olympics there.

"We have the home-court advantage, and we'll take advantage of that," said Bakken, who drove one of the United States' two women's sleds during the Salt Lake City Games that began on Feb. 8.

Her home court at the Utah Olympic Park is a twisting, steeply banked ribbon of smooth ice that is eight-tenths of a mile long and plunges 341 feet from top to bottom.

The sleek sleds hit speeds of 80 to 90 miles per hour and pull four or five times the force of gravity while careening through the lower turns during runs that last less than 50 seconds.

Bakken, a member of the Army's World-Class Athlete Program, is one of three Army Guard athletes who have made U.S. bobsled teams. **Mike Kohn**, from Virginia, and **Dan Steele**, from Oregon, are part of the four-man U.S. Army team piloted by civilian **Brian Shimer**.

Bakken joined the Utah Guard's 115th Engineer Group headquarters in March 2000 before becoming an Army world-class athlete.

Men's bobsledding is to the Winter Olympics what swimming is to the Summer Games. Women's bobsledding, however, became an Olympic sport for the first time this year, and competitors appeared before an estimated 12,000 spectators and a worldwide television audience.

"We train here all the time," Bakken said before the competition. "The big difference, of course, will be the crowds. I'll have to channel my energy to make it a positive experience instead of getting nervous about so many people."

Bakken is an eight-year bobsledding veteran. Born in Portland, Ore., she joined the U.S. national team in 1994, when she was a high-school junior. That made her the youngest bobsledder in the history of the com-



Bobsled driver Jill Bakken (left) and brakewoman Vernetta Flowers trained together for the Winter Olympics held in Park City, Utah.

petition, according to Olympic officials.

She has since earned a reputation as one of the top drivers on the women's World Cup tour that began in winter 1997, and she's regarded as one of the world's fastest drivers in the push start.

Two victories helped account for her best World Cup season in 1999-2000. She finished second in the overall standings to American Jean Racine, who, at press time, was to drive the number one U.S. women's sled during the Winter Games.

Bakken and her new brakewoman, Vernetta Flowers, a seven-time All-American sprinter and long jumper from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, posted the fastest start times during both nights of the U.S. trials, with times of 5.37 and 5.39 seconds, respectively.

Although they had raced together in Calgary only twice before the trials, Bakken and Flowers knocked three-time Olympic luger and women's bobsled pioneer Bonny Warner out of Olympic contention.

They are now one of the world's fastest-starting teams, and Flowers said that fact would be critical to their success.

"This is a relatively short track," she said. "The start will be more crucial here than on a lot of other tracks."

"We're still new to each other, so there's a lot of room for improvement before the Games," Flowers said in January. "I'm excited to see what happens then." — **MSG Bob Haskell, NGB PAO**

WHEN she awakens in the morning, she hurries to get ready for school. Each night she purposely sets her alarm clock for 6:15 a.m. so she can push the snooze button a few times and still be awake by 6:45 and to school by 8 a.m.

"I used to think that time moved fast in Bosnia," said **Jasmina Spahic**. "But not anymore."

The 25-year-old Bosnian woman, nicknamed Jazz by her American friends, was born in Zvornik, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and reared in Tuzla. She now lives in Temple, Texas, where she's been adjusting to American life since last spring.

In 1999 Spahic was working in Tuzla with American troops supporting the NATO peacekeeping effort. She spent a year and a half working as a translator and tour guide before she met Texas Army National Guard 1LT Joseph D. Hansen, who was deployed to Bosnia for two weeks to support the redeployment of the Texas Guard's 49th Armored Division.

Hansen, a bank president in Temple, noted that Spahic was an extremely intelligent young woman who, as a tour guide in Tuzla, wasn't fully using her talents.

"She needed access to an education," said Hansen,



Spahic (left): Dream come true in America.

who called his wife, Luci, to tell her about Spahic and what he thought they should do for her.

"When Joseph first explained his idea to bring Jazz to the states for a college education, it was a bit of a shock," Luci said. "But he told me how bright she was and how he thought this was a great opportunity to help someone. So I supported him, knowing that he wouldn't make an unwise decision for our family."

It took Spahic only one day to decide that she wanted to go to America to study business and live with an American family.

So the three of them began working to make the move happen.

Luci, a faculty member at Central Texas College in Killeen, immediately began the college enrollment process on Spahic's behalf. Joseph began the paperwork for her student visa through the embassy in Sarajevo, Bosnia. When the embassy denied his initial request, he continued to push the issue, assuring officials that his family would be dependable sponsors.

"They wanted proof of marriage, financial stability and an extensive amount of background information," Joseph said. "Between complications with the embassy, communications problems among the different agencies involved and passport difficulties, it's a miracle she made it over here at all."

Nine months after the decision to come to the United States, Spahic made it.

Spahic, who survived five years of war in Bosnia, said she's always had a good feeling about America and it's always been her dream to come here.

"When I reached Dallas, this wonderful family was waiting for me," she added. "And the first time I began to cry, this amazing American woman, Luci, was there. She's always been there when I've needed her. I'm so grateful to her and Joseph. I can't even begin to talk about how wonderful they are." — **SPC Luke Elliott, Texas National Guard PAO**





Monica Coke, 10, waits at Lawson Airfield, Fort Benning, Ga., to greet her father, 1SG Frank Coke.

Fort Benning, Ga.

Rangers Return From Afghanistan

HUDDLED in blankets and clutching American flags, family and friends in December welcomed nearly 200 rangers back to Fort Benning, Ga., from Afghanistan.

The soldiers from the 75th Ranger Regiment were deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"They accomplished their missions flawlessly," said COL Joseph L. Votel, commander, 75th Regt. "These men were instrumental in destroying Taliban and Al Qaeda strongholds."

Inside the hangar at Lawson Army Airfield, eager loved ones held placards and balloons for the returning troops.

SFC Thomas Smith's son, Bryant, had a T-shirt that said "Have you seen my daddy? He looks a lot like me, but he's

taller, with a high-and-tight and big feet."

Other families were happy to be able to share the holidays together.

"I told the children we'd put up our Christmas lights when daddy got home," said SSG Eric Brandenburg's wife, Tashia. "Every time we passed a house with lights on, they'd say 'Their daddy must be home.'"

Votel said the war on terrorism is not over.

"Operation Nobel Eagle continues and, as always, the rangers will stand ready to defend our great nation," he said. — Bridgett Siter, Fort Benning Public Affairs Office

Savannah, Ga.

Program Promotes Engineering Interest

THE U.S. Army Personnel Command reports that the Corps of Engineers is filling less than 15 percent of its autho-

ritized company-grade-officer slots. Under a pilot program that allows West Point graduates to work at COE district offices, the Corps' Savannah District in Georgia is helping to reverse that trend.

Pioneered by MAJ Thatch Shepard, deputy commander of the Corps' Wilmington District in Delaware, the program introduces young officers to the Corps and its mission.

"The Corps will benefit greatly from the exposure these young officers get from their on-the-job training with district engineers," said MAJ Mike Clarke, deputy commander for support at the Savannah District. "This experience will make them better, more well-rounded military engineers. Most of them will never get another opportunity like this during their military careers."

He said Army engineer officers are typically assigned to troop units for the first five years of their careers.

"Four young officers who recently participated in the pilot program have been given another view of the Army's engineer branch," said Clarke. "They've learned how the Corps supports the Army and the nation through military construc-

tion and civil-works programs."

2LT Scott Travis, one of the four participants, never imagined the Corps' extent of responsibility.

"Manning waterways and helping during natural disasters are projects I always thought were handled by civilians," he said. "I now have a new perspective about the Corps."

After spending time with the Georgia Ports Authority — touring lakes and learning about navigation, beach restoration and dredging — 2LT Katie Babitt said she benefited greatly from the training experience.

"I know this will help me in the future," she said.

Clarke hopes the experience will give the young officers a reason to consider returning in the future to work with the Corps.

"We're investing now in an effort to get them to come back to a district office in the future," he said. "Hopefully, these officers will share their experiences and generate more interest in the Corps. The more officers we get to know our business, the better off our regiment will be in the future." — Mindy Anderson, COE Savannah District



2LT Merlin Anderson inspects the placement of metal stabilizing beams while touring a construction site at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE)

Fort Campbell, Ky.

Forging the Will to Survive

YOUR helicopter banks sharply as small-arms fire rattles the fuselage. One of the aircraft's engines belches black smoke, and its high-pitched whine resonates in your ears. The pilots fight to maintain control and get you safely to the ground. Bucking and lurching violently, the aircraft tosses you forward into the shoulder straps, knocking the wind out of you.

This could happen to any soldier whose mission involves a journey into enemy territory. In the past, only soldiers with a high risk of being captured during a mission were allowed to attend Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) courses. Today, even combat-support soldiers who are at a moderate risk of getting captured can benefit from the program previously offered only to elite forces.

"The program is designed for soldiers who are going to be ahead of our own lines during operations," said CW3 Rodney Merrill, chief instructor with the 159th Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. "However, under the revised program, any soldier who holds a secret clearance, and passes a physical exam and physical fitness test, can attend the course."

Merrill said the 14-day course of both classroom and field training exercises is given quarterly. The instruction covers everything from water and land survival to how to evade a tracking dog.

He said the Army partnered with local law-enforcement



Using a commercial filter, SERE students collect water from a mud puddle during an evasion exercise

agencies to help train the SERE students.

Former prisoners of war and evaders from such previ-



SPC Jesse Hall of Co. B, 5th Bn., 101st Avn., looks for "enemy" activity near his link-up point.

ous conflicts as Vietnam and Somalia share their experiences with the students.

"The single most important thing we teach," said Merrill, "is the will to survive regardless of the circumstances."

The training culminates with a four-day evasion exercise. Students are separated into teams composed of soldiers with different military specialties. They board a helicopter that is "hit" by "enemy fire" and is forced to make an "emergency landing." After destroying or neutralizing all classified materials, the survivors quickly begin evading "enemy forces."

Dog teams from the Clarksville Police Department, Putnam County Sheriff's Office, 5th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment

Turney State Prison Farm hound the students as they move toward a recovery area. Mounted and dismounted infantry patrols are also on their tails.

"Along the way, they learn to work together," said Merrill. "They overcome hunger, thirst, fatigue, insects, the weather and the enemy patrols."

"There are a lot of misconceptions about SERE training," said CW2 James Lemons Jr., a pilot with the 101st Aviation Regiment at Fort Campbell. "I didn't know what to expect. Every aspect of this training is applicable to what I do. This kind of training has renewed my enthusiasm about being an aviator." — CW3 Brian K. Fox



Soldiers and the Gun-Control Act

tive, which means it applies to even those convictions that occurred before the amendment was passed, even if they do not involve the use of a firearm.

The Domestic-Violence Issue

A domestic-violence judgment includes convictions for acts against a broad spectrum of people. It's not limited to spouses or children. The law includes violence against a former spouse, a parent or a guardian. And the act may be committed by someone with whom an individual shares a child in common; by someone who is cohabiting with or has cohabited with the individual as a spouse, parent or guardian; or by someone who is similarly situated to a spouse, parent or guardian.

What acts and convictions qualify under the law presents a serious set of issues for commanders and their staff judge advocates, who must determine whether

for an assignment. Performing assigned duties. Meeting the standards of weight control and physical fitness tests. Ensuring that personnel records are updated to reflect promotion points and professional development information. These are just some of the details that soldiers must pay attention to in order to successfully navigate their chosen career paths.

But sometimes that path may be blocked by an unforeseen obstacle. And in one case — a recent federal law known as the Lautenberg Amendment to the Gun Control Act of 1968 — that obstacle could be a landmine.

The new ruling makes it illegal for a person convicted of a domestic-violence crime to possess firearms or ammunition, however old the conviction may be.

Until 1996, as an exception to the original law, people employed at the federal or state levels, including the military, could carry government-issued firearms during the performance of their official duties, even if they had been convicted of a felony. But the Lautenberg Amendment to the original law expands its prohibitions to include misdemeanor convictions, and it is retroac-



Steven Chucala is chief of client services in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at Fort Belvoir, Va.

a judgment is a conviction that comes under the law. Since most cases are adjudicated by local civilian courts that don't publish their opinions for research purposes, the law of each community must be examined to determine qualification. For example, a "nolo contendere" plea to a charge of spousal abuse in a 1998 Georgia case was declared by the state's attorney general not to be a "conviction" for Lautenberg purposes. That opinion disposed of one particular case, but is not a precedent for hundreds of other cases throughout the nation, as each state makes its own determinations as to what constitutes a "conviction."

Compounding the matter are the various state provisions for handling first offenders, which may exclude a conviction under the Lautenberg Amendment.

The Readiness Issue

The 1996 changes established by the Lautenberg Amendment prohibit military members with domestic-violence convictions from possessing firearms or ammunition, and from shipping, transporting, selling, or receiving any firearm or ammunition.

This means the soldier is denied the ability to qualify with a weapon or perform duties requiring a firearm — a condition that denies him or her the right to serve in nearly any career field available in the Army.

A commander must assign such soldiers to duties in which they do not come in contact with weapons, and the soldiers are not to be assigned overseas. The likely outcome of such restrictions is administrative elimination from the service.

The law does not prohibit a soldier from firing crew-served weapons such as missiles, mortars or artillery. But ironically, the same soldier could not touch or wear a 9mm pistol to defend himself in close combat.

The Commander's Responsibility

Commanders who have information that reasonably indicates that a soldier may have a Lautenberg-qualifying conviction must forward that information to their local staff judge advocates to determine if, in fact, it fits under the law.

The Department of the Army has declared that commanders will not take adverse action against soldiers with misdemeanor convictions that occurred before the amendment was passed, if that action is based solely on the conviction. However, these soldiers' careers may still be adversely affected, because the soldiers are prohibited from deploying overseas and

from possessing or handling firearms or ammunition.

The adverse impact extends to prohibiting attendance at service schools where individual weapons instruction is part of the curriculum, and it may preclude re-enlistment.

Post-Lautenberg (after September 1996) convictions permit commanders to initiate bars to re-enlistment and processing for administrative discharges. But commanders must allow soldiers a reasonable time to seek expunction of the conviction, or a pardon.

This includes the opportunity to seek help from legal-assistance office attorneys. In one such case, the author of this article is representing an outstanding career NCO who has a 14-year-old simple assault conviction, not involving a firearm, resulting from an altercation started by his former spouse. The soldier is awaiting the results of his petition for pardon from the governor of North Carolina.

Take Preventive Measures

Domestic problems can lead to serious consequences when they result in violence. Even if there is no injury involved, such as if a soldier slaps a spouse, the attack could lead to a conviction for simple assault — even if there is no weapon involved and the soldier does not receive a jail sentence.

Most clients fail to recognize the potential career-ending consequences of a push or shove during a moment of anger with a family member.

The framers of the amendment justify the law as an effort to keep firearms out of the hands of those likely to use them during domestic disputes. Unfortunately, their approach did not address the reality that military firearms are not freely available to soldiers in their homes and there is no apparent history of military firearms being used to commit domestic violence.

Nonetheless, Congress is not likely to change or repeal the amendment any time soon. Therefore, soldiers and their family members are strongly encouraged to recognize the signs of problems at home and to seek help in avoiding confrontations that may result in domestic abuse or assault, which in turn may lead to a family violence conviction that will adversely impact upon a military career and future employment opportunities. □



LTC Dennis Doyle, commander of the 421st Medical Battalion in Wiesbaden, Germany, said his unit is "the best ground and air evacuation unit anywhere."

He has good reason to think so.

Over the past eight years, the battalion has earned the coveted LTG Ellis D. Parker award as the best Army aviation battalion in the combat service support category six times, most recently from 1997 through 2000, consecutively.

Aviation battalions Armywide compete in combat, combat support, combat service support and TDA categories, while medevac units compete in the combat service support category only, Doyle said.

Units are judged on leadership, training, maintenance and safety standards. At press time, the 2001 winner had not yet been announced.

The battalion's success can be attributed largely "to where we are and what we do," Doyle said. As the only medical-evacuation battalion in Europe's Central Region, the 421st deployed to the Balkans when Task Force Hawk was formed in response to initial unrest in Albania, and the unit only returned from Kosovo in June of 2001.

It was the battalion's longest-term deployment, Doyle said, with elements of the battalion and its 45 UH-60A



Soldiers of the 421st Med. Bn.'s 557th Med. Co., a ground ambulance unit, undergo frequent training for missions that could occur at any time.

Air-Land Ambulance

Story and Photos by Heike Hasenauer

Black Hawk helicopters and 40 ground ambulances rotating in and out over the past five years.

Its soldiers provided command and control of subordinate units; continuous air and ground medical-evacuation support; and other support to V Corps, U.S. Army, Europe, U.S. European Command and Southern European Task Force.

Because weather conditions in Kosovo often keep aircraft from flying, ground medical evacuation was critical.

The 557th Medical Company is the only 40-ambulance ground-evacuation unit in the active Army, said SFC Steven Seitz, platoon sergeant of the company's 2nd platoon. It

has an excellent safety record, and its soldiers drove thousands of miles in Kosovo without any accidents, Doyle added.

The forward support medical company is generally located about four hours away from the combat support hospital, said 2LT Brian Balcerak. "So we set up an ambulance exchange point at a location about two hours from the CSH, with a four-man crew, a tent, and radios and antennas.

"Before patients arrived at the ambulance exchange point, a physician or physician's assistant had typically seen them, Balcerak said. "But, when they arrived at the AXP, they were still suffering from serious injuries. Our job was to transport them the rest of the way to the CSH."

"Medical evacuation is a harder task on the ground than in the air," Seitz said. "So our soldiers must have excellent land-navigation skills. They use the Global Positioning System, but they still have to calculate distances while bouncing around on the ground."

Additionally, soldiers at the AXP have to be able to treat patients who



UH-60A Black Hawk pilot CW2 Eric Gliba of the battalion's 159th Med. Co. prepares for a practice mission near Wiesbaden, Germany.

are bleeding heavily or having difficulty breathing, Balcerak said. "And we have to know how to treat casualties not only at the AXP, but inside the back of an ambulance."

Each M-997 ambulance accommodates two medics — one of whom is the driver — and four litter patients or six ambulatory patients.

The ground ambulances carry roll-

out litters that can be used to "scoop up" immobile patients, as well as spine splints, back boards, burn blankets, suction devices, oxygen and NBC equipment.

SGT James Conway said 16 people from the 557th shuttled between camps in Kosovo and Macedonia from November 1999 to April 2000.

"When the helicopters couldn't fly, we transported land-mine victims and pregnant women among bases, and to local hospitals," Conway said. "In six months, I imagine I went on 400 to 500 missions."

But not all the missions had happy endings, he said. Once, a special forces soldier died after being thrown from his vehicle. Another time, a Polish officer was killed while attempting to disable a land mine. Other times, the ambulance crew transported children injured by land mines.

Despite the tragedies he witnessed, Conway said, he was comforted by the fact that he was helping people.

In the background, but no less important, were the safety test pilots and mechanics from each of the 421st's

As the only medical-evacuation battalion in Europe's Central Region, the 421st deployed to the Balkans in response to initial unrest in Albania and only returned in June of 2001.

three maintenance platoons. They spent countless hours keeping the aircraft ready to fly, said CSM Tim Burke.

"The flying part is the sexy part, but the pilots and air crews can't go anywhere without the unsung heroes," he said.

"After every 500 hours of flight time, we completely tear down an aircraft's engine and transmission," said 159th Med. Co. maintenance inspector SSG Daniel Price, one of 37 maintenance personnel responsible for the company's 15 helicopters.

Besides regular aircraft-maintenance requirements, his crew has to



Courtesy 421st Med. Bn.

One of the 421st's three air-ambulance companies was involved in relief efforts after an avalanche in Austria left thousands of people stranded.

ensure that the medical equipment aboard the aircraft — such as the rescue hoist and the “carousel” that holds the patients’ litters — is operational.

“Our main mission is to evacuate wounded soldiers,” Burke said. “We also keep a rear detachment in place to support families.”

In Kosovo, battalion air crews mostly evacuated other countries’ soldiers and transported them to the CSH. If the patients required care not available in Kosovo, “we medevaced them to Macedonia, where the Air Force picked them up for long-distance flights elsewhere,” Burke said.

The job doesn’t come without pain, Burke said. In Kosovo, in 2001, a child fell into a frozen river. “One of our guys was lowered by electric hoist into the freezing water. Unfortunately, he couldn’t find the little girl.”

Another real-life mission took several helicopters from the 159th Medical Co. — one of the 421st’s three air-ambulance companies — to Austria to aid in the evacuation of skiers trapped by an avalanche.

“We got the call about an avalanche about 2:30 a.m.,” said pilot CW2 Eric Gliba. “At 5 a.m. the

airlifting people out of the Tyrol Valley.

“Over a three-day period, flying eight hours a day, we got 400-plus people and one dog out,” Gliba said. The entire operation got about 7,000 people out.

There were four “lanes” of air-rescue traffic, Gliba said. “Our Black Hawks, Marine Corps helicopters, Austrian military helicopters and civilian aircraft. And above all of us were the news crews. People were flying above and below each other in round-robin fashion,” he said.

“And the snow was so deep,” Gliba said. “Our crew chief got off the helicopter one day and fell to his chest in snow trying to escort survivors.

“That was my first medevac mission since joining the unit in 1997,” Gliba said, “and it was one of the best missions I’ve done here, because I felt I was really helping out.”

He had other opportunities later on, following Task Force Hawk’s deployment to Albania. “We transported the remains of land-mine victims to the

Army’s base camp at Camp Bondsteel.”

Gliba also transported an 8-year-old girl with multiple gunshot wounds to Camp Bondsteel’s CSH.

And on July 4, 1999, Gliba was among rescuers in a tunnel near Camp Able Sentry, in Macedonia, where the first casualty after the air war — a U.S. soldier killed in a traffic collision — took place.

In 2000, elements of the battalion participated in 16 deployments in 13 countries, among them “Atlas Drop” an exercise in Tunisia, “Rescue Eagle” in Romania, “Victory Strike” in Poland and “Focus Relief” in

Nigeria, said Burke.

Air-evacuation medics and crew chiefs in the battalion can expect to be deployed 75 to 100 days a year, Burke said. And the unit’s OPTEMPO won’t be slowing down any time soon. “When the XVIII Airborne Corps

Air-evacuation medics and crew chiefs in the battalion can expect to be deployed 75 to 100 days a year, Burke said.

leaves the Balkans in 2002, we’ll go back.”

Meantime, there are plenty of other critical missions to keep the battalion’s soldiers and equipment busy. With the U.S. war against terrorism now in its third month, aviation units are among those on highest alert.

Everyone hopes there won’t be a great need for medevac resources in conjunction with Operation Enduring Justice, Burke said, but the future is full of unknowns.

While the unit is not an official

Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic unit, it does respond to local emergencies and has practiced with German rescue-services personnel for such contingencies as train and highway accidents, Doyle said.

The battalion also supports the Army’s two major European training centers — the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels and the Grafenwöhr live-fire ranges — as well as the Heidelberg and Würzburg MEDDACs. During exercises, the air-evacuation crews stay on-site round the clock.

The 421st’s soldiers also provide medical training to health-care providers and health care to the local population in host nations during NATO exercises, Burke said.

“In my 25 years in the Army, I’ve never been in a unit that’s so successful, so motivated,” Burke said. “These soldiers train because they know something is going to happen, not because they want to be ready just in case it does.” □



A Black Hawk pilot studies a map before his aircraft lifts off on a simulated casualty-recovery mission.



Soldiers of the 557th Med. Co. prepare to load a simulated casualty aboard their M997 ambulance during predeployment training.

Austrian government asked for our assistance to evacuate stranded tourists. At 9 a.m. we got three aircraft off the ground, hooked up with 12th Aviation Brigade aircrews from Giebelstadt, Germany, and headed to Innsbruck. The next day we began



SGT Dewayne Moore stows equipment before his aircraft leaves for a training mission utilizing “George,” a mannequin.

Around the Services

Compiled by Paul Disney from service reports



Air Force

CLUSTER bombs dropped on strategic targets within Afghanistan played an important role in the quick collapse of Taliban forces. New technologies employed by the Air Force allowed pilots to drop their bombs from a much higher altitude, ensuring a high rate of survival for both pilots and aircraft.



Department of Defense

PRESIDENT George W. Bush signed an executive order Dec. 14th stipulating that service members in Afghanistan, and in the air space above it, will receive significant tax breaks. Service members directly supporting operations in Afghanistan from other locations are also eligible if they are receiving imminent-danger or hostile-fire pay.



Marines

LEATHERNECKS serving with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard the USS *Bataan* in the Arabian Sea practiced martial arts techniques before following special operations units into Afghanistan in December. At press time the 101st Airborne Division had replaced the 26th MEU in Kandahar, releasing the unit for other missions within Afghanistan.



Navy

The Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the famed Blue Angels, will start its 2002 season with a show this month at Naval Air Facility El Centro, Calif. The Blues will perform in some 70 shows in the United States and Canada during the season, which will end Nov. 9.



Company A, 3rd Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), is stationed at Fort Lesley J. McNair, in the city limits of the District of Columbia. It is historically known as the Commander-in-Chief's Guard and is patterned after GEN George Washington's personal guard. The unit maintains ceremonial and tactical proficiency in the weaponry and tactics of the 18th century. The CinC Guard appears in many Department of Defense and Department of the Army ceremonies year round. In addition to its ceremonial parade missions, the company provides memorial honors in Arlington National Cemetery and conducts tactical field training to sustain its warfighting skills and maintain proficiency in its other mission to respond to crisis, disaster or security requirements in the National Capital Region.



OMAR BRADLEY

During his distinguished 38-year military career, Omar Nelson Bradley rose to the highest rank in the U.S. Army, had been its chief of staff and served two terms as the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. An athlete in high school, Bradley lettered in both baseball and football at West Point, and later commented on the importance of sports in teaching the art of group cooperation.

